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BK POSTHUMOUS WORKS

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OF THE

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.

EDITED BY THE

REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,  
82 CLIFF STREET.

1851.

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California

Horae Biblicae Quotidianae.

# DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

BY THE LATE

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

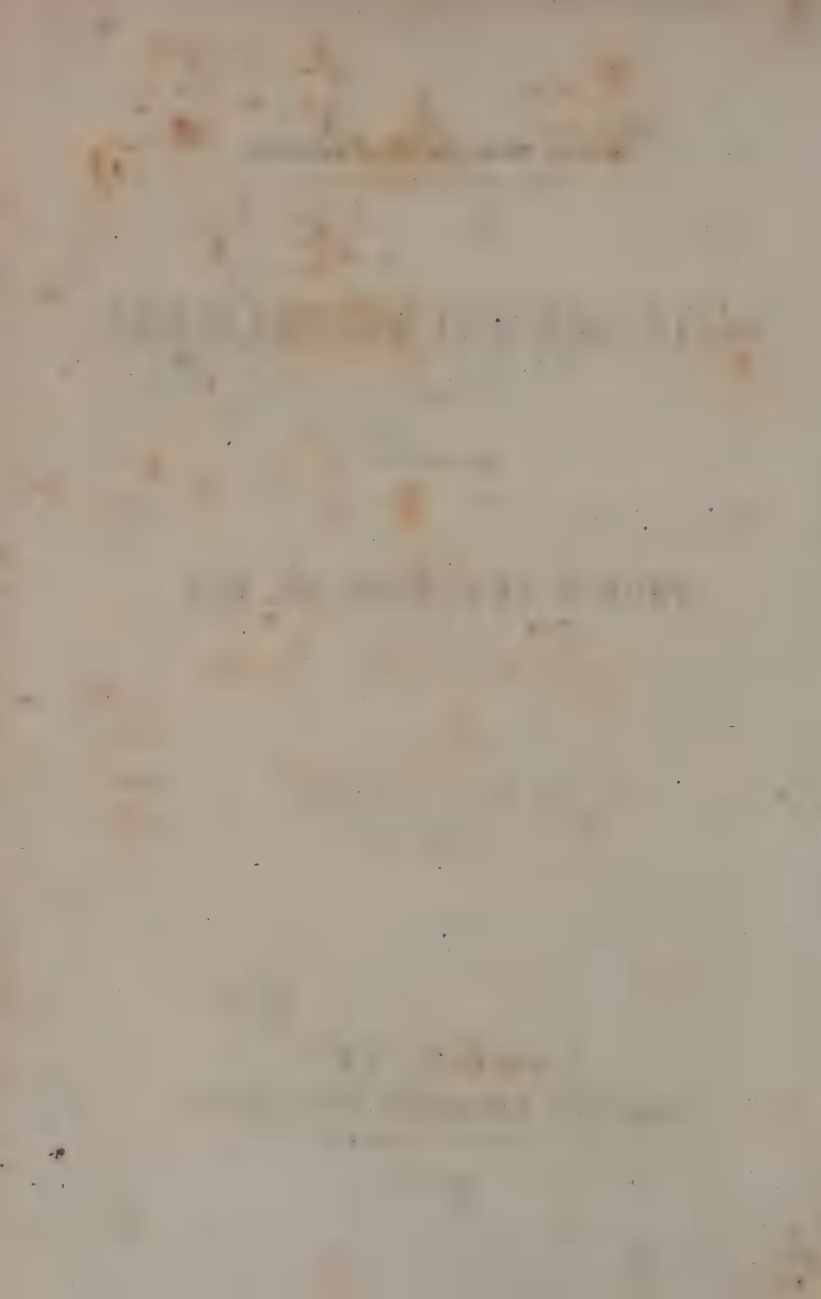
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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE two series of Biblical compositions now to be offered to the public, were commenced by Dr. Chalmers in October 1841, and continued with unbroken regularity till the day of his decease. Go where he might, however he might be engaged, each week-day had its few verses read, thought over, written upon—forming what he denominated “*Horae Biblicae Quotidianae*,” each Sabbath-day had its two chapters, one in the Old and the other in the New Testament, with the two trains of meditative devotion recorded to which the reading of them respectively gave birth—forming what he denominated “*Horae Biblicae Sabbaticae*.” When absent from home, or when the manuscript books in which they were ordinarily inserted were not beside him, he wrote in short-hand, carefully entering what was thus written in the larger volumes afterwards. Not a trace of haste, or of the extreme pressure from without to which he was so often subjected, is exhibited in the hand-writing of these volumes. There are

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but few words omitted—scarcely any erased. Instead of being a first and an only copy written often in the midst of a multitude of engagements, they look more like the last and the corrected copy of one who had few other tasks than that of their preparation to occupy him. This singular correctness was a general characteristic of his compositions. His Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans were written *currente calamo* in Glasgow, during the most hurried and over-burdened period of his life. And when, many years afterwards, they were given out to be copied for the press, scarcely a blot or an erasure or a correction was to be found in them, and they were printed off exactly as they had originally been written.

In preparing the “*Horae Biblicae Quotidianae*,” he had beside him for use and reference, the Concordance, the Pictorial Bible, Poole’s Synopsis, Henry’s Commentary, and Robinson’s Researches in Palestine. These constituted what he called his “Biblical Library.” “There,” said he to a friend, pointing as he spoke to the above-named volumes, as they lay together on his library table, with a volume of the “*Quotidianae*” in which he had just been writing lying open beside them, “There are the books I use—all that is Biblical is there. I have to do with nothing besides in my Biblical study.” To the consultation of these few volumes he throughout restricted himself. It would have interfered with—it



would have defeated his primary design in commencing these compositions had he used the many other helps which were at hand—had he been led away by their employment into any lengthened critical, or historical, or doctrinal investigations. These writings were not intended to be the vehicles of learned research. They were not intended to constitute an elaborate exposition. He had no intention of drawing up for the use of others a regular Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. The thought of others—the idea of publication, was not in his mind when he began to write. He used the pen in this instance for his own private benefit alone. Seeking to bring his mind into as close and as full contact as possible with the passage of the Bible which was before him at the time, he recorded the thoughts suggested, the moral or emotional effects produced—that these thoughts might the less readily slip out of his memory, that these effects might be more pervading and more permanent. His great desire was to take off from the sacred page as quick, as fresh, as vivid, and as complete an impression as he could—and in using his pen to aid in this, his object was far more to secure thereby a faithful transcript of that impression, than either critically to examine or minutely to describe the mould that made it. His own description of these “*Horae Biblicae Quotidianae*” was that they consisted of his first and readiest thoughts, and

he clothed these thoughts in what to him at least were the first and readiest words. Traces of his own peculiar phraseology do constantly occur, and yet in such a form as to demonstrate of that phraseology that it was as capable of condensation as of expansion—that it could be brief and aphoristic, or ample and many-volumed, as the time or the object might require. And yet—though both as to thought and expression of such instant and easy and natural growth—we have here the mature fruits of a whole lifetime's study of the Divine Oracles, conducted by one who tells us more than once that the verse in all the Bible most descriptive of his own experience is the utterance of David, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times."

To the great mass of intelligent and devout readers of the Bible—the very manner in which these "*Horae Quotidianae*" were prepared—the very object for which they originally were drawn up—giving to them as these do so unique a character, will not only deepen the interest with which they will be read—but will attach to them a value far beyond that which any larger measure of mere biblical scholarship embarked in their preparation could have bestowed. To such, the reading of them may render something of the same service which the writing of them rendered to their author, and render it all the more effectually, that he had his own and not their benefit immediately in

view. It may be even hoped that many who have not been very frequent or very interested readers of the Holy Scriptures, may be led to look upon them with a different eye, whilst looking at them through the medium here held up—attracted by what will form to not a few the chief natural charm of these volumes—the extreme freshness and vividness with which each graphic narrative of patriarchal and prophetic times is here presented, as seen reflected in that life-like image made by it upon an eye of the most exquisite susceptibility.

A glance into the volume of the “*Quotidianae*” now presented to him, will satisfy the reader that it is not fitted for continuous or consecutive perusal. To be read intelligently it must be read along with the original text of the Bible, and to be read profitably, it must be read as it was written, in detail. In the form now given to it, it may not be found so suitable for domestic as for private use. By combining the “*Horae Quotidianae*” and “*Horae Sabbaticae*,” making in each such modifications as may be necessary, they may at some future time be formed into a suitable guide and accompaniment to Family Devotion. Into whatever shape, however, they may ultimately be cast, it has been thought advisable that, in the first instance, they should be presented to the public as nearly as possible in the same state in which they were left by their author.

The "*Horae Biblicae Sabbaticae*" differ both in form and substance from the "*Horae Biblicae Quotidianae*." Written amid the quiet of the day of rest, they rise to a higher region, and breathe a calmer and a holier air. They are contemplative and devotional, passing generally into direct addresses to the Deity. But though springing from and grounded upon the portions of Scripture which had just been read, these Sabbath Musings are not limited to the topics which the Scripture passages embrace. The meditative faculty takes its flight from one or other of the elevations to which the Word has raised it—but it soars freely and broadly away. And the region oftenest visited, and from which it brings the richest treasures, is the inner circle of the private and the personal. References are continually occurring to those incidents, whether of a public or more private character, by which he was particularly interested, or wherein he was personally engaged. Full and unrestrained expression of his convictions and impressions in regard to these is often given, whilst in the great and sacred matter of his own personal intercourse with God—in his communings with spiritual and eternal things—the innermost movements of his spirit are here spread out to us, even as he spread them out beneath that eye which seeth in secret. The private journal which he had commenced in Kilmany having years before been discontinued, these "*Horae Sabbaticae*" might fitly be described—if the expression were

allowable—as the Sabbath diary of the last six years of his life. He kept them in strict seclusion. The “*Quotidianae*” volumes lay where access was not forbidden—they were shown occasionally to a familiar friend; but to no eye—not even to that of his nearest relative—were the “*Sabbaticae*” ever exposed. Whilst no difficulty, therefore, was felt as to the publication of the one, a difficulty has been felt as to the publication of the other. It was a region—that secret chamber of his innermost thoughts and emotions—which lay very deeply buried from the public eye—which he never voluntarily exposed—which he sensitively guarded against access and invasion. Ought that veil which he drew so carefully around it to be lifted off—ought that to be exposed to the public eye which he would himself have so sensitively shrunk from presenting to it? This is a question in some of its applications of exceeding difficulty; but yet surely there are the highest and best reasons for lifting up that veil—at least so far that those who have seen him only as he walked in all the colossal proportions of his loftier and more radiant manhood among his fellow-men—or heard him only as the full-toned swell of his marvellous oratory rose high above the highest pitch to which human eloquence is wont to reach—should see him also, as he bowed in simple, sincere, profound humility, when alone in the presence of God—should hear him, also, as in tones so low, so deep, so earnest, he breathed out

his confessions and desires and aspirations into the ear of the Holy One.

In closing these prefatory notices, I may be permitted to add, that it is in obedience to the express desire of my venerated father-in-law, that I have undertaken a trust which has fallen so unexpectedly into hands so unprepared to execute it. The mournful and anxious labour of execution is lightened by the thought—that those lips which have already fed so many shall be opened afresh—and that he, though dead, shall still be heard as if speaking in the midst of us. He cannot now to these new words spoken to us, add his own prayers on their behalf; but how many are there—and of these not a few whom he first taught to offer the effectual fervent prayer of faith—who will need no other invitation than this suggestion conveys—to unite in supplicating the Spirit of all truth and grace to accompany with His own vivifying energy these volumes as they are now sent forth.

W. H.

## NOTE.

THE following "Sabbath Exercises" were found among Dr. Chalmers' private papers, and are prefixed as a not unsuitable introduction to the present series of his practical and devotional writings. It will be perceived that they are scattered very irregularly over the space of time which they cover, and having been abruptly closed, they seem never to have been resumed. One reason for this the reader may perhaps discover in the following extract from a letter written by Dr. Chalmers to his sister only two days before the "Daily Scripture Readings" were begun, and when of course the plan of these and of his other Biblical compositions, must have been matured, as being on the very eve of execution:—

BURNTISLAND, *Sept.* 29, 1841.

MY DEAREST J——

I do hope that all these family trials and changes will issue in the spiritual wellbeing of us all. Would that we could make them subserve our discipline for eternity, one of the most essential preparations for which is delight in praising God—a higher acquirement I do think than even delight and devotedness in prayer. It is a great matter, however, that in the exercise of praise, we should not trust to the mere resources of our own meditation, but seek help in the Bible; and I have never, I think, approximated so much to the spirit of

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praise as when reading, not in a cursory manner, but with intentness and fixedness of thought, on the subjects laid before me in the Psalms of David. The archetypes of the real words in Scripture will serve us better than the conceptions which come at will or at random into our own minds, or when left to seek for them without this aid, by dint of our own meditative energies alone.—I am,

MY DEAREST J——

Yours very truly,

THOMAS CHALMERS.



## SABBATH EXERCISES.

CRAIGHOLM, *August 30, 1835.*

IN reading the life of Sir Matthew Hale, I find that he employed the pen to aid him in his spiritual meditations. He wrote as he thought; and hitherto my attempts at the sustained contemplation of divine things have been so confused and unsatisfactory, that I am glad to try the same expedient. May the Spirit of God, who worketh not without means but by them, bless this humble endeavour after a nearer approach to the viewless objects of faith and eternity! Guard me, O heavenly Father, against the illusions of fancy. Suffer me not to walk in sparks of my own kindling. In thy light may I clearly see light; and let me never abandon the guidance and supreme authority of that Word which thou hast exalted above all Thy name. Teach me the habit of communion with Thyself; and may these imperfect aspirations after Thee upon earth, open a way for the full enjoyment of Thine immediate presence and of Thy revealed glory in heaven.

*September 6.*—To express my religious state in one sentence: I have a strong general desirousness towards God,

though often suspended by the avocations of life, and daily overborne amid its manifold and besetting urgencies. And it is a desirousness not satisfied—as if knocking at a door not yet opened, with a sort of earnest and indefinite longing after a good not yet attained. Perhaps the experience which I have oftenest realized is that of the Psalmist when he said, “My soul breaketh for the longing which it hath unto Thy judgments at all times.” “He that drinketh this water,” says the Saviour, “shall thirst again; but he that drinketh the water which I will give him shall never thirst.” I have not yet drunk that water. I have the appetency—I hunger and thirst after righteousness; but am yet a stranger to the promised blessing—“they shall be filled.” And so I long after God; but know not what it is to be filled with the fulness of God. And yet there is one distinct and definite and intelligible direction which stands connected with the result of the “soul delighting itself in fatness.” It is to “hearken diligently” unto God. (Is. lv. 2.) It is to hear and our soul shall live. This points to the way in which I ought to entertain God’s Word. It is to charge myself with attention to it. It is to dwell on the import of its sayings, both as respects their meaning and their trueness. And for my encouragement I may remember the gleams of comfort which I have experienced on the entrance of such words as “The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin;” “In quietness and in confidence we shall have strength;” “Who-soever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Give me, O Lord, to feel more and more the preciousness and the power of Thy Scriptures. O let the ensuing week be characterized by the heed which I take unto Thy Word.

*September 13.*—What a damper to spirituality—what a rude extinguisher on all its feelings and contemplations is sin! An unforeseen gust of anger will put them all to flight; and the objective truth is lost in that disturbed and so darkened medium by which the subjective mind is encompassed. There is one lesson, however, to be gathered from the connexion which obtains between obedience and spiritual discernment on the one hand, between disobedience and spiritual dimness or obscuration on the other. A strict and conscientious perseverance in the walk of known duty may at length conduct to those manifestations after which we aspire—or, in other words, the humble doings of our every-day obedience may prove a stepping-stone to the higher experiences of the divine life. Certain it is, that to cast off this obedience is to cut away the first round of the ascending ladder; and so to make a commencement impossible. Let me then undervalue not the very least of the commandments. Let me be watchful and maintain a steady guidance and guardianship over all my words and works and ways. Above every thing, let me keep my heart with all diligence, and ever pray against those wretched aberrations of unruly temper and wrong affection which are breaking forth there. The order is, Awake, O sinner, and then Christ shall give thee light. That light I am profoundly sensible must be given—revealed by God, not discovered by men. It comes by an act of creative power—when the same Spirit which moved of old on the face of the waters begins His work of restoration on the chaos of our ruined nature. Lift upon me, O God, the light of Thy countenance.

*September 20.*—Surely, O God, a perpetual will to be

right must bring me right at last; but O how often is this will overborne amid the provocatives to anger and to all evil affection which beset my path. And yet how little I am tempted in comparison of others; and how much after all is there in the ease and quietness of my present retirement to aggravate my ingratitude, and make my hard ungodliness altogether inexcusable. Henceforward let self be annihilated, and Christ be all in all. O that I grew more and more in acquaintance with Him, and that in making Him the object of my thoughts I felt this subjective and recipient mind quickening and coming alive under the influences of the faith. Let me consider Him the Apostle and High Priest of my profession—that looking unto Christ as my propitiation I may have peace with God, that looking unto Him as my example, my footsteps may be established in the paths of righteousness. But what need of prayer and what need of persevering earnestness! Enlighten me, O God. Open the eyes of my understanding. Deliver me from the power of fantasies in religion. Let mine be a solid faith, exercised on those stable realities which are sought for and discovered only in the medium of Thy Word. I would learn of Thy holy oracles. I would take the sayings of the Bible simply and purely as they are, and exercise myself on the trueness of these sayings.

*September 27.*—In my aspirations after spiritual light, let me remember that it sufficeth not to look objectively at the truths which are without me—if subjectively I have nothing to look with but a dim or diseased organ of perception. It is not enough that there be steadfastness of gaze. There must be singleness of eye—insomuch that on this last condition it turns that the whole body is full of

light. Let me cherish, then, to the uttermost, simplicity of purpose and affection ; that my mind may no longer be divided between Time and Eternity, between the pleasures of sense and those pleasures of the spiritual life which are for evermore. That is a noble passage in ecclesiastical history which informs us of the way in which the mind of Augustine was ushered into a large place of manifestation and liberty—when, on the vigorous and decided renunciation of his besetting sin, forthwith all his fears and darkness were cleared away ; and a glory from the Lord shone upon his path. O my God, actuate me by Thy divine Spirit with the same high and holy resolve ; and knowing as I do that from first to last it is Thy grace which originates all, as well as prospers and perfects all that belongs to the wellbeing of the soul—I do most earnestly pray for the working of this grace within me, both to will and to do, that as my Faith animates my Practice, so my Practice may strengthen and irradiate my Faith.

*October 4.*—I feel how nearly related to each other are contact with the world and contamination from it—and I feel thoroughly assured that unless fortified by prayer, the fruit of my intercourse with society, even for objects of Christian usefulness, will be a relapse into the ungodliness and carnality of nature. Let me record, however, a gleam of sentiment this morning, which, if awakened and made permanent within me, would remould my character entirely. I felt as if the transformation of those for whom the Saviour died formed the most appropriate triumph of his great enterprise—the object, therefore, on which His heart must be intensely set—the great fruit of the travail of His soul, and with the prosperous growth of which He

would be most satisfied. Let my attitude, then, be in conformity with this main design of the economy which He has instituted. Let me throw no obstacle of wilfulness in its way. Let me look and pray for its fulfilment—that Christ would take my heart, such as it is, and make it such as it should be. O Thou Saviour and Sanctifier of men, I give myself up unto Thee, to be ruled in by Thy Spirit, to be ruled over by Thy law.

*October 11.*—Unless I make religion my great and engrossing concern, I shall be a stranger to all solid peace and satisfying enjoyment. I have at times caught a glimpse of the comfort which it yields to the spirit—when I merge my will into God's will—when I resolve to have no will of my own separate from God. I feel quite assured that this entire renunciation of self, and entire devotion to God's service, would give a simplicity and a grandeur to my existence—would throw an unclouded sunshine over all my ways—would raise me above the cares and provocations of life—would enhance even my sensible gratifications, and superadd those gratifications of a higher order which constitute the main and essential blessedness of heaven. O my God, may it be thus with me. Call me out of nature's darkness into thine own marvellous light. Give me to aspire after the graces, and hold forth to my acquaintances, and above all to my children, the example of all righteousness. Conform me to the Gospel economy under which I sit—that as Christ died for sin I may die to it—that as He rose again, I may rise to newness of life, and feel it my meat and drink to do Thy will.

*October 18.*—It is in my attempts to realize by an effort



of conception the unseen God, or any of His characteristics, that I feel oppressed by the impotency of nature's deadness and nature's blindness—though perhaps even in the greatest stupor of my spiritual faculties there is the fittest opportunity for the exercise of a greater than ordinary faith. Certain it is that in the philosophical arrangement of the mental powers, conception and belief are distinct from each other; and when the belief is not helped by the conception, then it is more like belief in the absence of sense—and all the stronger, therefore, if without the aid of any manifestation it can maintain its confidence without another foundation to rest upon than the bare testimony of God. Let me believe in the midst of heaviness. Let me believe in the dark. We read of faith in the *name* of Christ—and a name might awaken as dull and feeble an idea of its archetype as a symbol in Algebra does of the thing represented by it. To that name I will nevertheless adhere. On that name I will depend. And O God, may I find at all times that it is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.

*October 25.*—The most clear and satisfying view, I can attain of my relationship to God, is that of my dependence—its entireness—its intimacy, and the consequent subordination of the creature to the Creator. I never have such a feeling of closeness to Him, as when I reflect that I altogether hold of His will, and that as clay in the hands of the potter, so have I been made and moulded by Him whose hands did fashion me at the first, and whose right hand continues to uphold me. Many attempts have I made to obtain more adequate notions than I possess of the Deity; but there is none in which I better succeed than when I aim at an intense recognition of the subject

and filial relation in which I stand to Him when simply regarded as my Maker. It is not on the strength of any remote or recondite contemplations that I expect to grow in fruitful acquaintance with Him—but by the stepping-stone of such thoughts as might be apprehended by babes—but still which neither babes nor philosophers will apprehend to any practical effect, till the Spirit brings them home. O give me more and more to feel, that all I have and all I am is from Thee, and so as that each gift and each faculty may be consecrated to Thee back again.

EDINBURGH, *November 1.*—I this day partook of the Sacrament—and though under great spiritual hebetude, yet trust that my peace was not altogether due to this, but grounded, in part at least, on the confidence I have in the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, and my equal warrant and welcome with all men to receive and rest upon Him for salvation. I would make an entire dedication of myself to Christ. Let me no longer offend Him by my distrust. In doing honour to His truth may I establish the tranquillity of my own spirit. O God, work in me faith with power. Perfect that which is lacking in it. Give me peace and joy in believing, and cause me to feel both the pleasures and the powers of a new moral existence. Raise me above the degrading anxieties of the present evil world, and give me the confident gait, the elevated tone and purposes of an immortal creature.

*November 15.*—Let me apprehend the truths of Scripture simply—let me believe them surely; and the mind, when thus occupied, will be rightly set. I am restless and dissatisfied without God. With Him, and in the confident



and conscious possession of His favour, I should have life and peace. O my Father, accomplish for me this great translation—a translation out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel. I feel assured that it is a good thing to make a formal dedication of oneself to God, to make all we have and are over into His hands, in full reliance on His promises, and with the full purpose of doing His will. O help me, thou Spirit of all grace—help me to disenthral my affections from the creature, and to fix them with singleness of heart and singleness of eye on the things that are above. Let me henceforward entertain the prospects and embark in the pursuits of an immortal creature. Give me, O Lord, a moral greatness comporting with this high destination. May the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon me; and escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, may I be made a partaker of the Divine nature, and give all diligence to the work of my preparation for eternity.

*November 22.*—When the mind is in a state of hebetude, it should nevertheless keep a steadfast adherence to the objective—and of all the truths which objective Christianity presents, none is more fitted to minister at least peace, and at length love to the heart, than the righteousness of Christ, as proposed to us for the plea and the warrant of our acceptance with God. Let me cherish this thought even in the midst of spiritual dulness—and in God's good time I may be quickened into all the graces of the Christian life. Make me, O God, to experience the sanctifying and enlivening power of the truth as it is in Jesus. Rouse me from nature's apathy, and nature's lethargic indifference to the things of faith. Bring the

high interests of the unseen and eternal world to bear upon me; and with a realizing sense of these may I go forth on the work of diligent preparation for the life that is to come. Thou knowest my infirmities. Thou knowest the carnality, and the constant, the cleaving ungodliness of my heart. Turn this ungodliness away from it. Cause this sycamine tree to be plucked out of me, and planted in the wilderness—a land not inhabited. Give me access to the fountain of life; and usher me into a mental panorama of brighter and clearer manifestation than I have yet enjoyed.

*November 29.*—The great achievement is to bring every special affection which has the creature for its object under dominion to the love of God—itself a special affection. And what an emancipation from the thralldom of many cares and degrading anxieties would this bring in its train. What a noble independence would that man rise to, who had transferred his regard and confidence from uncertain riches to that living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy. This is the very achievement, O my God, which I long to realize. I would commit all to Thy disposal; and what an exemption—what an elevation of heart would it confer upon me—did I disburden my spirit of all the brooding imaginations and feelings of insecurity which attend a process of thought on the various possibilities of failure, or the exposures of human injustice, or the instabilities of all earthly possessions. My God, let me hold directly on Thyself. Let me roll over upon Thee the provision of my children, and all the temporal futurities whether of my own lot or of theirs. On this question give me the victory, O Lord; and save me from those forebodings which war

against the soul, and wherewith the great adversary knows so well how to ensnare and to distract us from the service in which alone the true riches are to be found. Then shall I reach that peace of God in Christ which passeth all understanding; and, delivered as from an incubus which weighs me to the dust, I should look for the largeness and liberty of one of God's own children.

*December 6.*—But certain it is that one may cease from anxieties connected with his earthly provision and prospects—not because he has schooled them down at the bidding of principle—not because they have been displaced by simple confidence in God—but because they merely have been displaced for a season by the urgencies of manifold occupation, which occupation after all may be of an earthly and ephemeral character—a busy sowing unto the flesh and not unto the Spirit, of which last alone it is that we reap life everlasting. What I desiderate, and because I am now destitute thereof, is direct and absolute confidence in a promise-making God, who hath said that as the day comes the provision will come—who tells us that godliness is profitable to the life that now is—who bids us seek the kingdom and righteousness of God first, and subjoins that all other things shall be added unto us—and who holds out the prospect of a hundred-fold more in this life than all that we may renounce for His sake; and this over and above the glorious consummation in the world to come, of life eternal. Losses and disappointments borne cheerfully, because He wills us so to bear them, may be considered as endured for His sake. And O my God, I again pray that in this warfare of the affections, Grace may have the victory.

*December 13.*—A high earthly hope has been damped and depressed, and I am not aware of a better occasion for the exercise of those virtues which are related to the habit and the life of faith. Let me not set my mind on any earthly object—and though the object should be lost the mind will remain unaffected. Is not *ἐπιθυμία* just such a setting of the mind on a something separate from God? Were there no such *ἐπιθυμία*, then nothing would offend me. I should live in the great peace of those who love God and love His law. I should like this earthly disappointment to be succeeded—not by torpor, not by mere insensibility—but by the increase of an affirmative feeling on the side of what is good and godlike—as a higher value for the true riches, an augmented confidence and delight in the living God who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. What a noble independence would this confer upon me—what a superiority to wealth or fame or any of this world's distinctions. I should move in a more elevated region, and at length reach to true greatness—a calmness which philosophy never has realized—a spirit of glory resting upon me from God—a peace which passeth all understanding. O my Father in heaven, take the direction of me. Enable me wisely to improve the discipline of all thy visitations. Save me from ambition, and the *μεριμνή* of a mind doubtful and suspended and hinging its happiness on the security of its earthly gratifications. Be thou the strength of my heart—my portion for evermore.

*December 20.*—As there is so much power ascribed to the Truth in Scripture, let it be my frequent exercise to summon this one and that other truth into my mind, and with care to have a correct apprehension of it—dwell upon

it simply as it is. And let me here record my experience, that of all the Bible truths taken together, there is none which tells more pleasurably or more powerfully upon me than the work of Christ in the room of sinners, as their substitute and their surety—and that not only in the way of peace; but sure I am that when thus occupied I feel on the firmest vantage-ground for the vigorous and cheerful and prosperous prosecution of the service of God. This experience remarkably accords with the pre-eminence given to Christ in His mediatorial offices through the whole of revelation, and justifies the saying of Paul, “I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified;” and so also of the expressions, “Christ the power of God,” “Christ the wisdom of God,” “the cross of Christ, through glorying in which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” Let me conform myself more and more unto the *mediatorial* economy of the Gospel. Let my fellowship be with the Son as well as with the Father. Let me live a life of faith in the Son of God, and test the efficacy of Bible sayings by acting faith upon them, or cherishing the apprehension of these sayings along with a sense of their trueness. O my God, let the Word thus raise me above the world. Let it dwell in me richly in all wisdom. Above all, let me be sanctified thereby; and may I realize this living evidence of its perfection and its power, that I am thoroughly furnished by it unto all good works.

*January 3, 1836.*—A Christmas vacation of all that weakness and torpidity which are the accompaniments of influenza. Now that I am beginning to emerge, O that it were into the activities and the new interests of a life of



godliness. I feel assured of the vanity of all other pursuits—tasteless, heartless, unsatisfying. Did I really love God, and love my neighbour as myself, with these affections alone, and an entire surrender of my whole mind to them to the utter absorption of all selfishness, what a busy, wakeful, and withal happy existence I should have. Write, O Holy Spirit, these laws upon my heart, and put them in my mind. Walk and dwell in me, O God, through the Holy Ghost given unto me. Let Thy power, O my Lord Jesus, rest upon my soul, and, making Thy grace sufficient for me, do Thou perfect Thy strength in my weakness. Save me from the cares, and let me not be satisfied with the comforts of this present world; but, giving the practical homage of my whole life to Thee, as unto the Being with whom I have to do, may I know what it is to wait upon Thee, O God, without distraction—to exercise myself at all times unto godliness, doing all things to Thy glory, doing all things in the name of Jesus. O for an undivided heart, cleaving with full purpose unto God, and so working for me this glorious moral result, that with my eye being single my whole body shall be full of light.

*January 17.*—I know no passage in Scripture that gives a clearer and more decisive warrant to a simply objective faith, than Heb. vi. 17-20. The hope is grounded, not on aught that is within, but on that which is independent of us, and external to us—the truth of God, the immutability of His counsel, the faithfulness of His promise, strengthened by this double guarantee that He has not only said it but sworn it. We do not steady a ship by fixing the anchor on aught that is within the vessel. The anchorage must be without the vessel; and so of the soul.

when resting, not on what it sees in itself, but on what it sees in the character of God—the certainty of His truth, the impossibility of His falsehood. Thus may I cast the anchor of my hope on the Foundation which God Himself hath laid in Zion—laying hold and taking refuge, not in the hope that I find to be in me, but in the hope that is set before me. I know that there is a legitimate hope, too, in the consciousness of a work of grace within me; but the primary hope, the beginning of our confidence, is of altogether an objective character, and respects God in Christ reconciling the world, and not imputing unto them their trespasses. Simplify and strengthen this confidence; and make it every day more sure and steadfast, O my God.

*February 14.*—I have had much to occupy and some things to annoy me. But I am sadly deficient in that I cannot work out an exemption from care upon the Sabbath—nor wait upon the Lord during that sacred day without distraction. Let it ever be a day of rest and of holiness to my soul. God has wonderfully supported me in certain public appearances of late—and why should I not cast all my anxieties upon Him, and give my whole adherence to His service and cause? Let me feel more and more that I am at His disposal—that He is the Sovereign and I the subject—and let me study the events of His providence as the evolutions of His will, the indices both of His administration and of my duty. What a blessed superiority would it confer over time, and nature, and accident, if I ascribed the respective parts aright to God on the one hand, to man on the other. I should have the peace of those who love His law, if I looked on events as His, on duties as ours.

*February 28.*—I am now reading Williams on Divine Equity and Sovereignty. He makes no reference to Leibnitz, though I think his system is substantially the same. I trust that I read it with impression. His views encourage the fostering of every good desire and purpose, and the confident forth-putting of all our activities in the divine life—seeing that God is represented as honestly intent on the salvation of all who will; and there is no adverse decree in the way of our sincere endeavour to be and to do what He would have us. They also put us in the right attitude for that moral victory after which we aspire—the attitude of entire diffidence in ourselves, seeing that nothing but defect and infirmity attach to the creature; and of entire confidence in God, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, and by whom alone strength can be perfected in weakness. These views of Leibnitz and Williams I hold to be of great value in theology, both as subserving the vindication of God and the practical guidance of man. I desire henceforward to look on myself as nothing—that the power of Christ may rest upon me, and that I may realize the joyful experience of the Apostle, who when he was weak, then was he strong. O God, I would turn unto Thee, do Thou turn unto me; begin the good work, and perfect that which concerns me.

*March 6.*—The discourse of one of my own students (Mr. G. M. D.,) and Williams' book together have had an enlightening and confirmatory effect on me. I feel more the perfect freeness of the Gospel; and obedience as the necessary result of our prior relation to God after the impediment to our walking together had been removed. O



my God, let me obtain a speedy adjustment of this great question: Let me believe in Thy testimony respecting Christ, and have the peace and joy of thus believing. Let me feel both the relieving and the regenerating influence of faith. I am exercised with anxious thoughts about the security of my temporal interests. Let me know what it is to rise above this sore degradation, and to devolve all my interests both for time and eternity upon God. In particular, let me lay hold of the imperishable riches offered, and that freely, for my acceptance in the Gospel; and I do enjoy at times a glimpse of the elate tranquillity, and superiority, and exemption from this world's cares, which such a commanding anticipation as this would confer upon me.

*March 13.*—Have been much engrossed—though sensible at the same time of a direct influence from the considerations of Faith in laying my anxieties about the provision or the interests of an evanescent world.—A good deal at the same time of my tranquillity on this subject, arises from the engagement of my attention with other things—with the matters of official and professional duty, and with the preparations of authorship. There is another temptation beside carefulness which exercises me. I have all along been vastly too much disquieted by the misconstructions of those who did not comprehend me; and have suffered much both from the fatigue of refuting and explaining the same thing a hundred times over, and from the vexation felt on finding that in spite of every effort there is a character assigned to my views, the very reverse of every principle by which I am actuated. But why should the oppositions of men thus affect me? Does it

not test my belief in the reality of an all-perfect mind that is now looking on, when I suffer so painfully from the adverse understandings of the limited and subordinate minds by which I am surrounded? Would it not nobly accredit my faith in God, that in quiet communion with Him I felt a refuge and resting-place when sorely urged by the strife of tongues? To Him may I at all times patiently commit my cause, and be still in the thought that He is God. Let me consider Him who endured not merely the controversy of adverse judgments, but of adverse wills—the contradiction of sinners; and let me not be weary nor faint in my mind.

*March 20.*—Exercised by the serious illness of a near and dear friend, and by another trying event in her family. It is well to be conversant among great elements—life and death, reason and madness.

It gives a pettiness to the lesser interests of time, and withdraws from them that intense *επιθυμία* which wars against the soul. And in connexion with this external discipline, there is something directive and confirmatory in Williams. I want to feel my own nothingness, to give myself up in absolute resignation to God, to lie prostrate and passive at His feet, with no other disposition in my heart than that of merging my will into His will—and no other language in my mouth than that of prayer for the perfecting of His strength in my weakness. I think that Williams' views are fitted to encourage one in God—to unrobe Him of that predestinarian severity in which a mistaken ultra-Calvinism has arrayed Him, to make us enter more into the confidence and all the feelings of a moral relationship with Him who made us; in particular,

to proceed on the plain calls and assurances of Scripture in the obvious interpretation of them—regarding God as pleased with our faintest, if honest aspirations towards Him, and taking comfort to ourselves in the consciousness of our own sincerity, in a heart that does not condemn us. Williams puts Calvinism on a more practical footing than most of its expounders do ; and I desire from the abyss of my own nothingness and vileness, to cry unto God that He might cause me to do as I ought, and to be as I ought.

*March 27.*—Have been exercised with a provocation by which the extension of our Church is like to be thwarted. Why should I not be still and know that the Lord is God ? Let me commit the thoughts and interests of my heart upon this subject to God. Let me acknowledge Him in all the ways which I shall take concerning it—trusting in God and leaning not to my own understanding. Let me never forget that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God—and let me be jealous with a godly jealousy over my own spirit—confounding not the zeal which is often excited about the things of the sanctuary with that pure, and holy, and heaven-born zeal which is lighted up by fire from the sanctuary itself. O that with all this activity and interest about public matters, I could be sure of a heart altogether right with God—penetrated with the conviction of sin, and at the same time filled with love to the Saviour. O that my children felt a holy influence in my example and conversation—and that the change which now impends over the family by the marriage of one of my daughters were sanctified to us all. O God, bless this connexion, and descend with a converting and convincing power on the hearts of my family.

CRAIGHOLM, *April 10.*—In solitude and stillness—but with a heart sadly prone to wander from the Fountain of light and life—made sad exhibitions of my natural infirmity—impatience in opposition to the long-suffering of the Spirit under the manifold interruptions of Edinburgh. Where is my slowness to wrath?—where the approach in the way of resemblance or imitation to the characteristics of Godhead? and where, alas! a prevailing sense of God, so as to make Him the guide, and the master, and the arbiter of all my doings? O may I simply and single-heartedly become Thy servant, and feel what a way of pleasantness it is that the meek and humble followers of the Lord walk in. I have left town, and desiderate a whole season of retirement, and close study, in the country. O my God, let it be a season of remarkable advancement to my soul. In quietness, and confidence, and resolute perseverance, let me have strength. Let me not overwork or overstrain. Save me from diseased ambition in the labours of my authorship; and may piety and judgment preside over all my compositions. Wean me from the world and from the world's applause; and doing with diligence what my hand hath found to do, let me commit all to Thee, both for time and for eternity. Make me wise unto salvation for myself, and wise to win the souls of one and all of my family.

*April 24.*—The reading which most tells on me at present is on the internal evidence by Owen, but still more by Halyburton. I see a closer dependence than usual between spiritual illumination and prayer, between the work of the Spirit in taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto the mind, and the actual revelation of

Christ within me. Let me look for Him in the Bible. Let me give earnest heed for Him there. O my God, make me to be experimentally acquainted with this inward, this spiritual revelation. Cause the Gospel to enter with power, and the Holy Ghost, and much assurance. May I see God in the Scripture. May I plainly discern in that book the signatures of His authority, and majesty, and wisdom. O give me to realize this precious manifestation myself, and enable me to expound it to others. Guide my heart and my pen, O Lord! and conduct me to the yet hidden mysteries of the Gospel of my salvation.

*May 1.*—O God, pour on me the spirit of grace and supplication. Teach me to pray. Give me more and more to feel its necessity, and to have experience of its power. Send me a token of encouragement from Thy sanctuary; and let me have the precious, the sublime satisfaction of knowing that there is the reality of a living interchange between God and my soul. Above all, my Father in heaven, give me the saving and spiritual manifestation of the truth as it is in Jesus. Admit me into a felt and actual fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Quicken me by Thy Spirit from this state of depression and of deadness. Enlarge me, O God, so as that I might break forth and beyond the limits by which I now feel myself so straitened and confined. Enlighten the darkness of my understanding, that I may know what it is to have the spiritual understanding of Thyself and of Thy Scriptures—to have the spirit of revelation and of wisdom in the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

*June 12.*—A long intermission of the Sabbath Exercises—and meanwhile how little, how miserably little, of the life of faith. I am reading Haldane's Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, and find it solid and congenial food. I have all my life viewed the truths of Christianity too much in the way of speculation, and as if at a distance from the objects of it. I have not closed with them. I have not laid hold of them. I have not appropriated them. I have been persuaded of the truth of the promises, but not embraced them. Heb. xi. 13. With the exception of an occasional gleam of light and comfort from the freeness of the Gospel, I have had no steady habitual personal sense of that freeness. I have abundantly acknowledged it; but I have not used it. And where, then, is there any evidence to my consciousness beyond that of a liking and recognition for orthodoxy, and a general or vague earnest of my being personally, and practically, and in very deed, a disciple of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? O my God, confirm my faith—give point, and reality, and decision to my purposes. May the transition from nature to grace be actually undergone by me. Work in me faith with power; and trusting in Christ, may I receive the Spirit as the earnest of mine inheritance. It is quite obvious that I do not pray enough—do not depend enough—do not break enough loose and away from the routine of my daily engrossments. Bestow upon me the grace of supplication, O God!

*June 26.*—I have this day partaken of the Sacrament, as well as administered it to others. I desire to consecrate myself unto God. I felt more this morning than I had ever before done the rightness and reasonable-



ness of the Scripture demand that all things should be done for His glory. I have at times been inclined to think that there was something hard and selfish in this requirement, but I have this day felt as if it were a view characterized by the depth and justness of that philosophy which ascends from phenomena to causes, and ultimately refers to the latter all of worth or excellence, or any property whatever that is observed in the former. Let me, therefore, implicitly follow Scripture, assured that the more I do so the more I shall find it to quadrate with truth and sound principle.

*July 31.*—Let me keep steadfastly by the belief, in the midst of darkness and deadness as to the conception. Is not this waiting upon God? Is it not trusting him even in the absence of all bright or sensible manifestation? But let me not only wait for this spiritual light and enlargement; let me also work for it. Let me proceed on the truth of those innumerable passages whence we learn, not only that obedience is prompted and sustained by faith, but that faith is brightened and confirmed by obedience. O my God, I feel how irregular my religious sensibilities, and how wretchedly small, if any, has been my progress in the life of godliness. O Lord, quicken me. Let the scales fall from my eyes. Let the veil be lifted off from my heart. Let this hebetude, this obstinate spiritual hebetude, be dispersed by the spirit of demonstration and power. Arouse me from my state of lethargy, O God, that I may become alive unto Thyself, and in Thy light clearly see light. I pray for these things to myself; I pray for them to others also, specially to those of my own household.

*August 7.*—Better ; but a constant sense of deficiency, which is well if it could find place and adjustment along with a confidence in the objective sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Why not more firm and frequent in the exercise of faith ? Why not try more than I do the efficacy of simple reliance on the Word, and more particularly on such assurances—“ Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved ;” “ The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin ;” “ This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His son.” Let me look fully and freely out upon these things, but combine with this the keeping of the precepts, so as to realize the harmony which obtains between the subjective and the objective in Christianity. Let me, for example, pray for forgiveness, believing that what I ask I shall also receive. But let me also forgive others, even in the midst of sorest provocations, else my faith shall have failed, or rather faith will be impossible,—for how can I, with the consciousness of not forgiving, have comfort or confidence at all, when I say, —forgive my trespasses, even as I forgive those who trespass against me?

*September 18.*—What an ennobling effect it would have, could we withdraw in thought at all times from a world that vilifies and vulgarizes the soul, to the sublime realities wherewith the soul has to do. I find it easier to apprehend the greatness of the Divinity, than any of his moral perfections, or his sacredness ; yet even the former were an elevating thought ; and let us be thankful if at any time, and according to any view of Him, if just, we can attain to a realizing sense of God. O that He were the constant companion of my walks, and that I knew



what it was to have the idea of God in Christ ever present and ever powerful within me. Let religion, O God, be my ruling concern, and let my family, seeing this, be led, one and all of them, to religion also.

*October 2.*—When in a state of physical exhaustion or discomfort, I am the more apt to give way under the power of any wrong or wayward instigations. On all hands I stand greatly in need both of prayer and watchfulness. O my God, make me more habitual in my supplications at a throne of grace, and let me proceed upon sanctification being a business. O that I were more intent upon it—that I made it the distinct and the main object of my life, and suffered nothing to interfere with it. Let me not remit the cultivation of my heart, but give myself wholly thereto; and O that my converse in society, as well as my whole conduct in life, so bespoke the altogether Christian, that my life should in itself be a continual confession of the Saviour before men.

*October 9.*—I am in danger of a great failure, both in the wisdom and charity of the Gospel, and I must cast the whole of this burden on the Lord. Let not my vehemence so transport me as that my good shall be evil spoken of. It so happens that a great public interest has led me to concur in a measure to which, apart from this object, I might have felt prompted by a spirit of personal revenge, and this latter may be the aspect which it is to wear in the sight of men. What an occasion, then, for the exercise both of prudence and principle. Let me commit it altogether unto God, from whom cometh both the answer of the mouth, and the preparation of the heart.

Above all, let me be enabled to say, both in faith and with a good conscience—"Forgive my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me."

*October 16.*—I deeply feel that it is not in man who walketh to direct his steps. O my God, let me take heed lest I fall. Uphold my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. Interpose for me, Thou Saviour and Sanctifier of men; and seeing that I have never with my languid faith, and yet unquelled legality—have never been able to preserve myself from delinquencies, let me now throw myself into the bosom of Gospel immunities, and taking up with the righteousness of Christ as my righteousness, and at the same time knowing that who do so in truth are visited with a new spirit of love and holy obedience, let me try this way of it, O my God, and experience a recovery and a revival in so doing—thus receiving the Spirit through faith, and not through the works of the law. O may I be an offence and a stumbling-block to none of Thy children. Save me, save me.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS.



## DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS.

CRAIGHOLM, BUENTISLAND, *October 1, 1841.*

GENESIS I. 1-13.—In the beginning the world was created. In the beginning Christ, not was created, but Christ was. (John i. 1.) And God possessed wisdom in the beginning of His way. (Prov. viii. 22.) Christ was with the Father “before the world was.” (John xvii. 5.) And wisdom was possessed by the Lord “before His works of old.” The antecedeny of the Logos to all creation, Himself therefore uncreated, is in harmony with these passages.

The beginning spoken of here has been variously estimated. My own opinion, as published in 1814, is that it forms no part of the first day—but refers to a period of indefinite antiquity when God created the worlds out of nothing. The commencement of the first day’s work I hold to be the moving of God’s Spirit on the face of the waters. We can allow Geology the amplest time for its various revolutions without infringing even on the literalities of the Mosaic Record—while Nature herself bears witness to the need of a creative interposition, more especially for the later part of the work of the third day—

even though geologists should be able to assign a competent natural process for the former part of that day's work. If the one could be executed by the old laws of matter, the other requires new dispositions—these incontestable evidences of a directing wisdom in the formation of the actual economy of things.

14-24.—The sixteenth verse is perhaps retrospective, as the first and part of the second are. At all events the language admits of being so rendered as to signify that on this fourth day the lights were not made first to exist, but made to be for signs and the division of time, which they could only be by the dispersion of those dark and heavy vapours which might have altogether obscured the firmament from the view of the earth. This solution is strengthened by the philological arguments of Rosenmüller; and even Granville Penn, the greatest of all our recent alarmists, has a theory by which to dispose of the imagination that the heavenly bodies were formed on the fourth day. If geology can make good periods of solar darkness, it were in further harmony with our views.

By the organic creations of the fifth day the evidence for a God grounded on collocation,\* which forms far the clearest and most effective testimony given by the phenomena of matter to the fact of an intelligent fabrication of the world, is greatly multiplied and extended beyond what it had been by the work of the third day.

24-31.—By the work of the sixth day God hath imprinted still more manifold traces of His hand in the evidence of collocation.—Let me make this use of the information that God made man in His own image. Let it cure me of the scepticism which distrusts man's instinctive beliefs or

\* See Dr. Chalmers' Works, vol. I. pp. 191-228.

perceptions. Let me recollect that in knowledge or understanding we are like unto God—and that in His light we see light. He would not practise a mockery upon us by giving us constitutional beliefs at variance with the objective reality of things, and so as to distort all our views of Truth and of the Universe. We were formed in His image intellectually as well as morally ; nor would He give us the arbitrary structure that would lead us irresistibly to believe a lie. When men deny the objective reality of space or time, I take refuge in the thought that my view of them must be the same in kind at least, though not so perfect in degree, as that of God—or of Him who sees all things as they are, and cannot possibly be the subject of any illusion.

God saw all to be very good. But all has since been transformed. We may learn from the curse upon the ground, that there has been a change even in the materialism of the world—but a change far more deteriorating on the moral and living department of creation—for how lovely still are Nature's landscapes—how coarse and revolting the aspects of human society.

GENESIS II. 1-18.—The institution of the Sabbath to commemorate the seventh day—a reason afterwards introduced into the body of the commandment itself—is with me decisive of the days in the first chapter being literal and not geological days, or days of indefinite and uncertain length. We cannot imagine a mere allegory to have been alleged as a reason for the observation of a precept.

The description of the garden of Eden proves that the flood had not so changed the surface of the earth as to obliterate its geographical features.

The whole narrative of Adam in the garden should be



taken in the plain, obvious, and literal sense of it. The attempts to allegorize it are wholly gratuitous and groundless; and more, are disproved by the subsequent allusions made to it in Scripture. It is, however, a plausible supposition, and may be entertained without violence to the passage, that the tree of knowledge of good and evil may have been so characterized—not from any peculiar virtue in its fruit to open the eyes of the understanding, but simply from its being the tree which tested the obedience of our first parents, and on their treatment of which hinged the difference between their good and their evil. Before that conscience had smitten them with a sense of their transgression, they might not even have had the conception of what sin was.

18-25.—My only remark on this passage is on the quotation made from one part of it in the New Testament; and on the immense intercommunion of strength and security which the two great departments of Scripture give to each other—the Old Testament by its prophecies mightily confirming the divinity and inspiration of the New; and the New by its manifold quotations, extending to almost every separate book, conferring on the earlier record the whole benefit of its own appropriate and distinct evidences. The number of independent witnesses, though contemporaneous and living together in the same place, forms a strong security against aught like a deceitful collusion or conspiracy amongst them. How much stronger when the witnesses are separated from each other by whole centuries, and lie scattered along the line of many generations. Could an imposture have thus descended as it were by bequest from one age to another? And what can we infer from the sustained consistency of



a progression so stately and regular as that which runs through Scripture history, but that one great presiding Spirit, even the spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning, actuated the whole of it?

GENESIS III. 1-13.—The serpent was actuated by Satan, as is evident from other Scriptures. That is a very lax theology which disowns, and still more which derides the doctrine of this evil Spirit and of his mischievous agency in the hearts of men. I feel as if it gave additional security to my salvation, and inspired additional confidence in Him who is the author of it—when I view His work as a warfare, and the success of it as His victory over him whose works He came to destroy. It seems all the more to identify my safety with His honour; and never never will He give power or reason for the great adversary to say—"There is a poor sinner, who, misled by the assurances of your Gospel, trusted himself to you, and you have disappointed and deceived him." Let me not be afraid, then, but only believe; and let this view not only confirm my faith but animate my practice. Let me enter into the spirit of the warfare; and, in the name of Christ my captain, let me resist the devil, and he will flee from me.

The interposal of the devil at this point in the moral history of the world is of itself a wondrous evolution, and affords a glimpse of the relationship which obtains between our earth and the distant powers or places of our universe.

14-24.—The most interesting passage in these verses is the first evangelical promise couched in terms of obscure generality, and afterwards repeated with greater and greater degrees of distinctness, till evolved into full accomplishment by the Saviour and His sacrifice. The

bruising of our heel by the serpent marks the annoyance that for a time he will practise upon us. The bruising of his head marks the destruction that will at length be inflicted upon him. Inflicted by man too—by the seed of the woman, even by Him who was made of a woman to redeem them that were under the law. (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) The effect ascribed to the tree of life in verse twenty-two, might serve to reconcile us to the literal understanding of the effect ascribed to the tree of knowledge. There is a remarkable coincidence between the property here ascribed to the tree of life and the description given of the same tree in xxii. 2. of the Book of Revelation, “whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.” It accords with my whole understanding of what is sacred, whether in Christian or general philosophy, to accept of such information as is here given of the influence of a particular food on the soul of man—once I am satisfied with the credentials on which the professed revelation is based.

GENESIS IV. 1-17.—The offering of the fat proves that the firstlings brought by Abel unto the Lord were slain, and probably in sacrifice. Add to this what the Apostle tells of what that was in Abel which made him be accepted of God—even faith; and then shall we have both the objective and the subjective of our own peculiar Christianity combined in the religious services of the first age of the world. There has been much stress laid on this passage in argument for the Atonement; and it is right to prosecute reasoning and inquiry as far as the light of Scripture goes. But it should never be forgotten that the main strength of the argument for this and every other essential truth of Christianity lies in the direct and un-

equivocal and unambiguous statements of Holy Writ. We must not lose sight of them, for this would be quitting our main hold, in prosecuting to a conclusion those trains of inference which after all but land us in propositions nakedly announced—not left to be gathered up by implication, but laid simply and clearly before us. Still let all such investigations be carried on to the limit of being wise up to that which Scripture has written, without attempting to be wise beyond it. And above all things let us not commit such a blunder in the intellectual tactics of our warfare with heresy, as to spend all our efforts either on the defence or extension of the mere outworks, when we can at all times betake ourselves to an impregnable citadel.

18-26.—It is interesting to peruse this record of first inventions and of the origin of the arts. We do not read of Abel's children. There is no account given of more than two great families, and it is of Cain's family only that we read as signalized by the first appearance of arts or of trades amongst them. The resemblance of Tubal-cain to Vulcan has been remarked by those who attempt to find the traces of sacred in profane history. The meaning of Lamech's speech to his wife is not very obvious at first sight. Of the various conjectures which I have seen, I prefer the supposition of its being a blasphemous mockery on the part of Lamech—that as Cain had earned by his crime the protection of God who promised to avenge his death—much more had he.

There seems great reason for understanding the call in verse twenty-six passively. Then men began, not to call, but to be called by the name of the Lord. The family of Seth stood out and were distinguished from the family of Cain by their sanctity and godliness, and were called the

sons of God. This might serve to explain Gen. vi. 2. Certain it is, that whereas we read of bigamy, murder, and profane mockery in the family of Cain, we read in Seth's of the close walk of Enoch to God, and his translation into heaven, and of Noah's surviving faithfulness after that a general degeneracy had overspread the species.

GENESIS v. 1-11.—The juxtaposition of the two likenesses in which Adam was created and Seth was begotten—being only separated by the distance betwixt verses first and third of this chapter—speaks strongly the purpose of their introduction here, which was to contrast the perfection of man before his fall with the universal degeneracy that was propagated downward after it. Adam made in the image of God—Seth begotten in the image of Adam—not the original but the transformed image—for the birth of Seth took place after the death of Abel, and therefore long after the expulsion from paradise—an historical proof then of the transmitted corruption, afterwards affirmed doctrinally by Paul in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. This being said of Seth and not of Cain marks more impressively the descent of the constitutional virus—in that it passeth onward to one of whom we read no such atrocities as those recorded of Cain and his descendant Lamech. And from Seth through Noah to the whole of our species it has descended.

11-24.—I have met with no remark from the commentators on the similarity of names in the two families of Cain and Seth. Enos, Enoch; Irad, Jared; Mehujael, Mahalaleel; Methusael, Methusalem; and at length both pedigrees concluding with Lamech.

The great event of this passage is the translation of

Enoch—distinguished in his generation by his piety and extraordinary gifts. The seventh from Adam, as noticed by Jude, he prophesied—and that in the sense of fortelling. He must have been supernaturally endowed from on high; and it is interesting to know that between the Fall and the Flood the earth was thus visited by at least one inspired messenger. And from the subject-matter of his prophecy—denunciation of a coming vengeance on the ungodly, he probably like Noah was a preacher of righteousness. God did not leave himself without a witness in antediluvian times. Men were abundantly warned to flee from the wrath to come.

25-32.—By the chronology of this chapter Adam must have lived to the time of Lamech, and most of the antediluvian patriarchs must have been alive during the youth and great part of the manhood of Noah; so that, by the intervention of but one step, Noah may be said to have heard through many channels of the things personally known to Adam, the great progenitor of the human family. At all events, Lamech might have had the infliction of the curse upon the ground because of transgression reported to him at first hand. It is uncertain if there be any more in his speech respecting Noah than simply that he would help to lighten their sore labour. The contrast between the fertility and spontaneity of Eden, and the intractableness of the earth at large over which mankind were sent abroad, must have been fresh in the recollection of the first man, and may have come fresh from him on the knowledge and observation of all those descendants whom he lived to hold converse with.

GENESIS VI. 1-18.—The third verse admits of various



interpretations ; but I am not aware of any valid reason for abandoning that sense of it which seems the most obvious. My spirit will not always strive with human perversity and wilfulness—a most important lesson, and in harmony with many other declarations in Scripture.

I should have mentioned that the alliances spoken of in the second verse were probably intermarriages between the two great classes of opposite character in the human family, and whereof we have two specimens among the descendants of Cain and Seth.

The declaration of the third verse may have been long anterior to that of the seventh. The increasing wickedness of the earth, as stated in the fifth verse, may have been the effect of the withdrawal of God's Spirit. I take the statement of the sixth verse as given. I am not fond of explaining away, more than is clearly required, all that is said of God when such attributes are ascribed to Him as belong to man. The literality of human eyes and human hands may well be dispensed with, but I will not be positive in denying Him those affections which are ascribed to Him in the sixth verse, though these be denominated human also. Let me at least see in this passage God's utter and irreconcilable antipathy to moral evil.

9-22.—“ Enoch walked with God,” and God translated him to heaven. “ Noah walked with God,” and God saved him from the destruction that came upon all flesh.

The Flood was miraculous ; but it is remarkable that God is sparing of miracles, and seems to prefer the ordinary processes of nature, if equally effectual, for the accomplishment of His purposes. He might have saved Noah and his family by miracles ; but he is not prodigal of these, and so He appointed that an ark should be made

to bear up the living cargo, which was to be kept alive, on the surface of the waters ; and not only so, but He respects the laws of the animal physiology, as He did those of hydrostatics, in that He put them by pairs into the ark, male and female, to secure their transmission to after ages, and food was stored up to sustain them during their long confinement. In short, He dispenses with miracles when these are not requisite for the fulfilment of His ends ; and He never dispenses with the ordinary means, when these are fitted and at the same time sufficient for the occasion.

GENESIS VII. 1-10.—Mark here, as in many places of the Bible, the free and fearless ascription of a righteousness to Noah of which we should most naturally and readily conceive that it was a personal righteousness, and in consideration of which God saved him from the flood that came upon the world of the ungodly. This should not be explained away, as it often is by an ultra and over-anxious orthodoxy.

It looks to us a mystery that God should have created animals for which there is such a loathing on our part—doleful creatures and unclean—the very sight of which fills us with aversion and disgust—the rat—the toad—the millepede insects, &c. It enhances this feeling when we read the direction given to Noah for the perpetuation of all these generations. The unclean as well as the clean were preserved for transmission to the world as it now is. There must be a purpose in all this, though as hidden from our comprehension as the origin of evil. Enough that we are wise up to the light of experience and Scripture. Let us not at present aspire beyond these.

1-24.—Geologists are now converging to the opinion

that there are no sensible vestiges of the Deluge upon the earth; and Dr. Fleming, who is of this opinion, contends also for its consistency with the truth of the Scriptural deluge, in that it may have been brought upon the world without the alteration of any of its sensible features. And certain it is, that if the water from beneath came by openings in the bottom of the sea, or by the fountains of the great deep being broken up, one can imagine an elevation of level from this cause without any such disturbance on the surface of the earth, as might affect aught that is visible either in its islands or continents.

Wilkie the painter told me that the experiment was tried with a dove from a balloon, and that it returned after it had been let out, and that an experiment was intended with a raven. I have not heard if the latter trial has actually been made—but this belongs properly to the next section.

GENESIS VIII. 1-13.—The stopping of the fountains of the deep, through which there was an efflux of water from beneath, would restrain the further increase of the Flood from that quarter, but unless there were other openings made by which a reflux could be effected, one does not see how the decrease of the Flood can be accounted for. The wind might take up all that had been deposited from above, but this alone would not effect a subsidency of the waters to their former level.

The sending forth of the dove, her finding no rest for the sole of her foot, her return to the ark, the projection of the hand through the window to pull her in, her second mission and return with the olive leaf, altogether make up a very graphical representation. I may here record



the strong interest I feel in these Scripture histories, enhanced I have no doubt by the recollections of my boyhood, convincing me that it is a most useful education for the juvenile mind to be seasoned and made familiar therewith.

13-22.—There is an insight, it seems to me, afforded by the twenty-first verse into the mind of God. I cannot say that He relents for what He has done; but I feel to be most interesting His announcement of the principle on which He determines not to do it over again: "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." As if He looked all the more indulgently to man, because sin was the fatality of his birth. I will not make this consideration the ground either of a charge upon God, or of a palliation to man. But surely it may well be made the ground of an enhanced confidence in the imputed righteousness of Christ. If I suffer because of Adam's transgression, though I partook not therein personally or by any act of my own, let me hesitate no longer to draw on the obedience of Christ—when so fully bidden and warranted to do so—though I had no hand whatever in that obedience. As by the disobedience of one came condemnation, so by the righteousness of one comes justification.

The promise that there shall not be another flood, lasts "while the earth remaineth." That the earth did remain after as before the Flood, we have reason to believe; but it will not remain should a geological catastrophe by fire upheave a new surface for the dry land of the next era. The consummation of the present system, as intimated in 2 Peter iii. 7, does not frustrate a promise which holds good only during the continuance of that system. There will be no flood between this and that day when the earth and the works therein shall be burnt up.

GENESIS IX. 1-17.—The extension of the grant as to food from the fruits of the earth (Gen. i. 29, 30) to the bodies of animals, is evidence that the use of animal food would have been unlawful before the Flood; and the restriction here given as to the blood, without any formal extension of the grant to it afterwards, proves that in the eating of blood we but follow the unexpressed tradition of the Church, in like manner as we observe the first day of the week for our Sabbath. For this restriction of the blood, so far from being cancelled, was repeated in the decree of the Council at Jerusalem. Yet the general declaration of Paul upon meats, as well as the general spirit of Christianity, favours the abolition of this prohibitory enactment.

The rainbow, as a memorial of the Covenant, might not necessarily imply the establishment of any new optical law. The appearance of the rainbow indicates generally a departing rain; and at all events is only seen when the sky is partially overclouded. This phenomenon betokens at the time a rain not universal, and most frequently in the act of departure or towards its approaching termination.

18-29.—Those general prophecies which present a sketch or outline of their subject without its details, and which were of the kind delivered first and earliest, or in the most ancient times—are in keeping with their greater distance of view, or greater remoteness from the observer of the field of contemplation. We have here the future family of mankind regarded in three great divisions—the descendants of the three sons of whom the whole earth was to be overspread; and the prescience which foretold these, though it wants that evidence of being supernatural which lies in the particularity of its intimations, has more

of that evidence which lies in the wider interval of time between the delivery and its fulfilment. The curse laid on Canaan, the blessing associated with Shem, the power and the enlargement assigned to Japheth—these have all their antitypes or corresponding realities in the present day. The posterity of Ham suffered extirpation or dreadful slaughter under the hands of the children of Israel ; and still exhibit all the features of a wretched and degraded race in enslaved Africa. The posterity of Shem were signalized by the special revelations of heaven ; and out of them was selected the nation in whom all the families of the earth are to be blest, the highly ennobled Jews—now under a long and dreary reverse of fortune, but still the destined instruments of a great and glorious regeneration that is coming. The posterity of Japheth—who fill Europe and have overspread America, and in the regions of Eastern Asia are now dwelling in the tents of Shem—present the third and last attestation to the truth of the utterance recorded at the close of this chapter, and so to the prophetic inspiration which gave it forth.

GENESIS x. 1-5.—I understand the isles of the Old Testament to be the countries on the other side of their sea ; or looking northwestward, to be Europe both insular and continental. This quarter of the world then is ascribed to the descendants of Japheth ; and attempts have been made to find out a connexion between the names of its various countries and the names of his sons. The only conjectures of the sort which I at present recollect are those by which Kittim is associated with Chittim ; and that again with the Cetae ; and by a wide enough transition, though perhaps by some intermediate steps, with Macedonia.

Elishah has also been associated with the Ellenes or Greeks. There may be other and better derivations—some of them, no doubt, very fanciful ; yet not wholly without evidence or probability either. And here it occurs to me to say, that whereas we are apt to look on these dry catalogues of names as exceptions to the worth, perhaps even as objections against the divinity of the Bible—for aught we know there may be embosomed in such hieroglyphics, if they may be so termed, a precious mine for the exploration both of historians and travellers. See an example of this in the Preface to Forster on Mahometanism, where, from the Scriptural nomenclature alone, both of men and countries, he seems conclusively to have made out the demonstration of an identity between the present Arabians and the descendants of Ishmael.

6-20.—The children of Ham were far from restricted to Africa. The aboriginal inhabitants of the land of Canaan were his descendants ; and if they were the Nineveh and Babel of the Euphrates, which stand associated here with this account of them, they must have spread themselves a good way east in Asia.

One can understand how the chief of hunters might become chief in communities and nations at that period—the extirpation of wild beasts being a great public service—besides its being a vocation eminence in which was founded on the same qualifications which fitted for the prowess and the stratagems of war. But Nimrod is said to have been a mighty hunter *before the Lord*. It is uncertain whether this is to be understood in a good or bad sense. In Genesis xxvii. 7, Isaac proposed to bless his son “before the Lord ;” and in Gen. vi. 11, it is said that the earth also was corrupt “before God.” The Bible tells us

nothing which can throw light on this question ; and it is possible that neither of these alternatives may be meant. The expression may simply mark the great historical importance of Nimrod and his exploits—as being in the special eye of Providence with a view to the further evolutions of that administration which has respect unto the world, as, in the language of Bishop Butler, God's world.

21-32.—I believe that a greater number of connexions can be traced, and these more satisfactorily, between the names of persons and countries among the children both of Ham and Shem than those of Japheth. Of Ham we have Mizraim and Canaan and Sidon and Heth—of Shem we have Elam and Asshur, and Aram and Uz, and Eber and Sheba. It is remarkable that Shem, at the outset of his genealogy, is signalized as the father of all the children of Eber, whose name I understand gave rise to the appellation of the Hebrews.

Did the confusion of tongues take place in the days of Peleg, when the earth was divided? It does not follow that it was divided by the formal consent of mankind, or by a governing power which presided in equity over the allotments. It may have been divided by the mere dispersion which took place while Babel was a building, and God scattered them abroad—leaving each party to fix on their own territory, to which they would by simple possession soon acquire a possessory right ; and this would confer on each, and that right speedily, as firm and just a claim to their respective settlements as if these had been legislatively assigned to them.

GENESIS XI. 1-9.—The long period of human life would

secure the stability of the first language—so that we are not to wonder at there being still but one language at the end of two thousand years.

Etymologists have tried to discredit the confusion which took place at Babel, by pointing out common words in the various languages of the world. But it needed not that there should be a total diversity in order to stop the channels of a mutual understanding among men. A change in a small proportion of the principal words that were most necessary for the purposes of society, and therefore the most frequently used, would suffice for putting an end to all useful converse, by the constant blunders and cross-purposes that would ensue.

That was certainly a most stupendous miracle which led to the dispersion of mankind over all the countries of the world; and whereby, as they receded from the family which God signalized by his special revelations, they were all the more apt to fall away from the true religion. But there was another miracle equally stupendous, and a miracle of tongues too, by which the people of all various languages were recalled to the Faith from which they had departed. By the one miracle, each tribe, understanding only their own speech, were secluded from the rest of mankind, because saving the words used by themselves, they understood no languages. By the other miracle, the Apostles and first teachers of Christianity were made to understand all languages. By the first, God raised up barriers for the segregation of the species into distinct communities. By the second, He threw down these barriers, that the bearers of the heavenly message might range freely over the world, and gather out of all nations the family of the faithful.



10-26.—According to the Hebrew chronology, Shem must have lived down to the days of Jacob.

I may here state a single error of Mr. Cunningham in his scientific chronology, who founds on the number of intervals between one event and another which are divisible by 7 or its powers. He does not consider the immense number of intervals furnished by a given number of chronological events. Eight hundred such would furnish  $\frac{1+799}{2} \times 799 = 319600$  intervals—whereof by the doctrine of probabilities there is the chance of 45657 being divisible by 7, and 6522 being divisible by 49 or  $7^2$  and 932 by 343 or  $7^3$ , &c. And yet still he tells us of a recondite wisdom in the whole scheme of Providence and Prophecy, because of so many of the numbers of years between one event and another being divisible by 7 or the powers of 7. It were of importance, ere we gave in to his conclusion, first to ascertain how many should be so divisible by the doctrine of chances, and to see whether there is any marvellous excess over that number. There is something grotesque in his fixing on some such interval as that between the death of Arphaxad and the league of Smalcalde, and then telling us that because of its being divisible by 7 or  $7^2$ , there must be some deep-laid scheme of Providence in all this, when so very many of these chronological intervals must have this property. The same may be said of his Timal Fractions.

27-32.—Notwithstanding that Shem still lived in the world, and might have upheld in it, we might imagine, the knowledge and worship of the true God—there must have been a lapse by this time, if not into idolatry, at least into polytheism. For it is said by Joshua, xxiv. 2, that the fathers, among whom was Terah, “served other gods.”

I feel now as if entering on the daylight of history, and emerging from the obscurity of its earliest dawn. And I may here record the effect of old associations with the Bible narratives which are now before me. I feel quite sure that the use of the Sacred Dialogues as a school-book, and the pictures of Scripture scenes which interested my boyhood, still cleave to me and impart a peculiar tinge and charm to the same representations when brought within my notice. Perhaps, when I am mouldering in my coffin, the eye of my dear Tommy\* may light upon this page, and it is possible that his recollections may accord with my present anticipations of the effect that his delight in the Pictorial Bible may have in endearing still more to him the holy word of God. May it tell with saving effect on his conscience, in whatever way it may affect his imagination; and let him so profit by its sacred lessons of faith and piety, that after a life of Christian usefulness on earth we may meet in Heaven, and rejoice for ever in the presence of our common Father.

*November 1.*

GENESIS XII. 1-9.—The Gospel promises in the Old Testament become more distinct when they converge and concentrate on the families of those who live in later ages of the world, and through whom the Messiah was to come—thereby defining and limiting His appearance within a more limited section of mankind than before—as from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Judah, from Judah to David. What a movement in advance, for example, from the obscure generality of the promise made to our first parents, to the announcement that in Abram should all the families of the earth be blessed—the announcement

\* His grandson, Thomas C. Hanna, then in his sixth year.



of that day which Abram saw afar off, and was glad!—The first call of Abram comprehends two promises by God; first, that he would show him the land of his future posterity—second, that in that posterity all the earth was to be blessed. Abram obeyed in the confidence, that as God said so it would be done; and this he did in the exercise of a simple faith. God did appear to Abram. He did make good the first or nearest promise, and this would confirm his hope of the second fulfilment—superadding the assurance of experience to the assurance of faith.

9-20.—The mystery of this passage lies in the deceit of Abram being recorded without any animadversion on the evil of it. He is called the father of the faithful; and all true disciples walk in the footsteps at least of his faith. But the trait that is given of him here is surely not for our imitation. There are other examples of the same thing held forth in Scripture, and without the reprobation that we might have expected—as with Jacob, and David, and several others; examples that are fitted to stagger those who reflect not sufficiently on the incapacity of our narrow faculties with their limited range to pronounce on all the objects and history of the divine administration. Though morality in the abstract is unchangeable, it looks as if in the concrete there was a progressive morality from one era to another—an accommodation to the ruder and earlier periods of humanity, distinctly intimated by our Saviour when He tells of polygamy being allowed before the times of the Gospel, because of the hardness of their hearts. It is worthy of remark, that there is no example, as far as I can recollect, of any deception or imperfect morality of any sort being recorded of Christian disciples in the New Testament without a prompt and decided

condemnation—as in the case of Paul rebuking Peter for his ambidextrous policy between Jews and Gentiles. In those cases given in the Old Testament, where God is represented as giving a specific order to that which without this express sanction would have been questionable or wrong, we feel no difficulty, and think that Butler's explanation thereof might well be accepted as altogether satisfactory.

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GENESIS XIII.—I have never entered much on the study of Scripture characters—though I doubt not much might be gathered this way both for the purpose of a moral influence on one's own mind, and also so as to make out a dramatic consistency in the statements given and the traits exhibited of certain individuals, which would furnish an internal evidence for the Bible. We may here remark Abram's moderation and love of peace—a grace of temper that is of habitual residence, and is distinguished in this respect from the dereliction into which he is recorded to have fallen in the last chapter, and to which he may have been precipitated by the violence of his fears. It is well to make a study of the virtue which ennobled the saints of other days; and it is also well that we know of their infirmities, both to save us from despair, and to teach us humility and watchfulness.

I have a strong apprehension that the promise given to Abram is yet to have a more complete fulfilment than it has ever yet obtained. The fortunes of the Jews make up a leading-line in the chart of history; and there is something sublime when one looks back to the antiquity of their origin, and forward, in the expectations which Prophecy inspires, to their ulterior destination.

GENESIS XIV. 1-16.—At this rudimental stage in the history of the world, the kingdoms were small; and those who governed them, though dignified by the name of kings, were very petty chiefs. We recollect an infidel jest of Voltaire's on the insignificance of the district of Judea—from whence he would insinuate how unlikely it is that a place so limited should have been the real theatre of transactions and events which, if authentic, are far the most important that ever took place for the destinies of our species. There is something in our view highly unphilosophical in such an observation—as if the same play of essential interests and feelings, and the same manifestation of highest principle, the same lessons, the same moral, could not be as effectually exhibited within the limits of a narrow as within those of the widest materialism. There is no country which, apart from revelation, has bequeathed greater examples or done more for the civilization of our race than ancient Greece—yet look to the smallness of its territory, and see how all that is greatest and most imposing in secular history, was condensed there within a space far more contracted than was the land of Judea or the kingdom of Scotland, which last may, in her Church contests and by the doings of her Church, give forth lessons which may influentially and most importantly tell through the whole of Christendom.

16-24.—Of all the opinions which I know on the subject of Melchizedek, I prefer that which describes him as simply being without a genealogy—that record of such estimation among the Jews as deciding the tribeship of each individual in their nation, and more especially their right if they possessed it to the peculiar privileges and immunities of the tribe of Levi, Here was a priest who

had no such document in his favour, no recorded ancestry; and as such a priesthood as he exercised did not originate with the temporary appointment of the Mosaic dispensation—so neither would it expire with the termination of it. It seems an evidence that the light of a substantial Christianity shone upon our earth in the patriarchal ages; and we might also gather from this passage a warrant for the typification of much that we read of in the Old Testament. Nor can we doubt from the name of Melchizedek as a King of Righteousness, and the name of his kingdom which makes him also to be the King of Peace—that he prefigured a higher Priest made after his own order, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life—a Priest upon His throne who harmonized peace of earth with the glory of that law which He magnified and made honourable, and so with glory to God in the highest—through whom Mercy met with Truth, and Peace and Righteousness have kissed each other.

Abram's honourable conduct in reference to the spoil is a noble subject for a moral lesson from the pulpit—the lesson of fidelity in littles.

GENESIS XV. 1-6.—This is an exceeding precious and truly evangelical passage. It gives a full warrant to the appropriation of faith as distinct from that of experience. I am *thy* shield and *thy* exceeding great reward. What should, after this, stop the reunion of God with man? Abram is our great prototype, and we are required to walk in the footsteps of his faith, as being the father of the faithful. Let us lay confident hold of God as our friend, even as he who was called the friend of God did. There

is an offer of friendship on His part, let it be accepted on ours; and the acceptance lies in our firm reliance on the honesty of the offer. Let us not stagger at a privilege so infinitely above our merits and our hopes being brought so wonderfully nigh unto us; but against hope, against all the likelihoods of nature and experience, let us believe in hope. Such faith, even though we thereby arrogate to our own sinful selves the greatest and highest of all blessings, has no arrogance and no presumption at all in it. It has another character altogether. It is yielding a due honour to one of the divine attributes, even the attribute of Truth—so that the stronger the faith, the greater is the glory we render unto God. What a precious harmony is this, that our greatest peace and God's greatest glory are at one—that in counting Him faithful who has promised, we do that which at one and the same time most advances His honour and most tranquillizes our own fears. Rebuke away, then, from us, O God, all the doubtings of unbelief as well as its disinclinations.

7-21.—There is a diversity of opinion about the fourth generation in the sixteenth verse—some referring it to the Amorites, others to the children of Israel. Caleb, who came out of Egypt, was the fourth from Judah who entered it. But without adverting further, either to this numerical adjustment, or to the other of the four hundred years in *v.* 13—I feel more arrested by the evolution here given of God's policy in dealing with nations. The places are very numerous in the Old Testament which warrant the idea that the guilt of a nation is proceeded with as the guilt of an individual is—in that there is a reckoning for the past with the nation even as there is with the individual; and that this reckoning, with its consequent



vengeance, comprehends the earlier as well as the later guilt, even though the former may have been incurred at the distance backward of many generations; and so not a creature may be alive who had personally shared in it. However mysterious such a proceeding is to us, it falls in with many analogies of history and experience, is of a piece with the doctrine of original sin, and even the New Testament can be quoted in support of it as well as the Old. The Saviour speaks of filling up the measure of the iniquity of their fathers, and of the sins of their ancestors being visited, and all the things done since the days of righteous Abel coming on the men of His generation. This is at one with the first destruction of Jerusalem, which the repentance of good king Josiah did not avert, and strikingly at one with God's forbearance from the work of vengeance on the Amorites, for so many generations as till their iniquities should be full. May God avert from our own Britain the horrors of an anarchy which seems to me as if impending over her; and pour forth the spirit of repentance and reformation over the land.

GENESIS XVI.—In this picturesque narrative of Hagar in the wilderness, there is much to interest the artist and man of taste. But the thing of solid and surviving interest is the memorable prophecy of the angel, and which to this day manifests its own striking fulfilment, in the lawless and predatory and marauding habits, but withal the independence of the present Arabians. What materials, even in the state of the world as it now is, for such evolutions as shall make the truth and divinity of Scripture palpable to all men.

And what a lesson here, too, of the ever wakeful care

and providence of God. What a noble and elevated freedom should be ours from those wretched anxieties which so distract and degrade us—did we bear about with us all the confidence we ought in that eye which never slumbers and never sleeps. “Thou God seest me.” What a protection from care, and at the same time what a stimulant to watchfulness—from care about the things of this life, and to watchfulness lest we should fall short of the things which belong to our true peace and life everlasting. Give me to be spiritually minded—and then I shall have both life and peace.

GENESIS XVII. 1-14.—Observe how duty is intermingled with promises in these communications from God, who, ere He speaks of His Covenant, bids Abraham walk before Him and be perfect—a word this last of which it were well to fix the Scriptural signification in the various passages where it is used, and more especially where characterizing man or prescribing to him his obligations.

The everlastingness of the Covenant and everlastingness of the possession speak strongly for an ulterior fulfilment; and my convictions are quite on the side of a literal restoration yet to come of the children of Israel to their own land.

Altogether this is a passage of great Christian importance, and is referred to and reasoned on as such by the Apostle Paul. The Covenant had been already made with Abraham previous to his circumcision, which rite was but a sign and seal thereof. It was in no respect an act of meritorious obedience by which the blessings of the Covenant were earned, though, after the positive observance had been instituted, these blessings might have

been forfeited by the neglect thereof. The analogy between circumcision and baptism forms the strongest defence against the objections which have been alleged to the ministration of the latter to infants.

15-27.—The counterpart propriety on our side to God's precepts is that we shall obey them, and the counterpart propriety to His promises is that we shall trust in them. God is as much offended by our failure in the one as in the other. Indeed, He commands us to believe as well as to obey; to do homage to His truth as well as to His authority. And O what a blessed harmony is there in the act of rendering such a homage between God's glory and our own comfort. There was perhaps a mixture of incredulity in the mind of Abraham when he laughed at the announcement of a son. It is testified of him, however, that he was strong in faith—a strength tested by the unlikelihood in the face of which he was called to place his reliance upon God. And what but a want of faith in Him as at all times our very present help, can account for those anxieties, and tremors, and nervous depressions wherewith we are visited when menaced by appearances of danger, whether to property, or to the health of near and dear relatives. O my God, let me find more direct access to Thyself, and keep close by Thee as a friend who sticketh closer than a brother. May my trust be in the living God.

As Abraham circumcised his flesh on becoming God's by covenant—let me, in virtue of that Covenant by which Christ is mine and I am Christ's, know what it is to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

GENESIS XVIII. 1-9.—There is an exceedingly pictu-



resque and graphical interest in this narrative; and I feel the highest value for it as an exhibition of the kindness and simplicity of the patriarchal manners in patriarchal times. There is something particularly graceful and imposing in the politeness of Abraham; and I can now better understand the fitness of sacred biography as abounding in the exemplars of all that is good and great in the character of man. One likes the exuberant and affectionate hospitality of the good old man; and the very materiel of which it was made up enters most fitly and beautifully into the description of the whole scene. I do not know if it has ever been made the subject of a painting, but surely there is enough of the visible and the local to furnish the artist with objects for an impressive representation: the tent door, the tree, Abraham and Sarah, the three strangers, the servant, and the food which was dressed and set before them. Let me not hide myself as heretofore from my own flesh. Let me remember that hospitality, even to the unknown, thus exemplified in the Old, is expressly enjoined in the New Testament, and under the warrant, too, of the example recorded in the earlier Scriptures—"For thereby some have entertained angels unawares." I have much to learn and much to unlearn ere I attain the perfection of the second law.

I figure the great deference of Abraham for these unknown personages, in his standing by them while they ate—as if officiating in the capacity of their servant. Connect this with their being unknown, with his being unaware of their dignity; and we see in this trait an exhibition of the virtue—to honour all men.

9-22.—The laughter of Sarah implied unbelief; and so

perhaps, though in a less degree, might that of Abraham. It is very clear throughout the whole Bible, from first to last, that nothing is more offensive to God than unbelief. Let me take the lesson, and confidently look for the evidence and confirmation of the new birth in my soul.

I should have noticed in the converse of the angel with Hagar, the likelihood of his being the Angel of the Covenant. The same appears equally obvious in this passage. One of the three angels seems to have been left alone—the transition from three to one appearing first at *v. 10*, and that one, for there is no intimation of any change from him, being termed Jehovah in the thirteenth verse. After this, however, Abraham convoys all the three, and then it appears that the one signalized as Jehovah had been conclusively left with him, and is termed Jehovah repeatedly throughout the conversation that follows.

What a precious testimony to Abraham, that he brought up his children aright. O my God, may this feature be realized more and more in me. I need Thy help, and the continued upholding of a strong purpose and a strong principle within me.

The Lord (Jehovah) speaks of going down to see and to know how the people of Sodom have conducted themselves. This will at once be called an example of accommodation. Let us not push this style of commentary too far, lest we lose the graphical and strong impression which the Bible is fitted to give of God, in regard of what He is said both to feel and to do.

23-33.—In this remarkable conversation, we find nothing that is not analogous to God's ordinary procedure in the government of the world and laws of human society. The property of a few as a preserving salt for the

benefit of the many, and for the maintenance of public safety, is quite accordant with experience. They are a leaven for good, and it is quite incalculable with what efficacy a very small proportion of Christian worth in an aggregate of human beings tells for the preservation and good order of a commonwealth.

I have been in the habit of applying this principle to the object of reclaiming a corrupt and neglected population from the degeneracy into which they had fallen. It is marvellous with what effect one man, were he to undertake the charge, could bear, for the purpose of good moral or economical or religious habits, upon the families of a district. Were all the men of willingness and worth rightly marshalled for such an experiment, it is marvellous how many are the thousands who could be visibly and beneficially worked upon for good, by the fewer than tens who chose to go forth amongst them on the errands whether of religion or general philanthropy.

GENESIS XIX. 1-11.—It is altogether worthy of remark here, that in the last chapter, they who had been with Abraham were said (v. 22) to turn their faces from him and go towards Sodom—and this immediately after that the Lord (Jehovah) had said—I will go down now, and see what Sodom and Gomorrah have done. The number with Abraham was thus reduced to two with Lot, who, it is most probable, therefore, were the same who had been with Abraham, and left him in conversation with the third, who throughout is styled Jehovah—the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, or Angel of the Covenant.

We may remark in the passage now before us, the high estimation in which the virtue of hospitality was held,

and the sacredness that stands associated with its obligations. Lot does not seem to have known the rank of these strangers; and though angels, he did not receive them as such, but entertained them unawares, even as Abraham at the first did—though afterwards, Abraham must have made discovery of one at least, styling him Jehovah (*v. 27, ch. xviii.*) which he did not at the first—(*v. 3.*)—although it was Jehovah who appeared unto him—(*v. 1.*) Now, the remarkable thing is not the wickedness of Sodom, though very extreme, but the proposition of Lot, who, rather than violate his duty to his guests, offered to give up his daughters to the mob who had assembled at his door.

12-26.—In *v. 13*, when it is said that the Lord hath sent us to destroy Sodom, there is a further harmony with our preceding argument on the Angel of the Covenant, as being the one of the three who remained behind to converse with Abraham, and sent the other two forward to execute His vengeance on the cities of the plain.

The request of Lot implies a certain measure of faith. His argument for being allowed to live in Zoar, viz., that it was a small city, and therefore that he was asking no great amount of remission from God's original purposes of vengeance, proves a belief in the certainty of the coming destruction, which we might think would have made Lot desirous of as great a removal as possible from the scene. But instead of this he craves a place, if not in the midst of it, at least on its confines, which looks like a confidence in God for safety, and that in the immediate juxtaposition of what was fitted to shake and to alarm nature. Yet after the destruction did come, this faith, if such there was, gave way at length to fear.

The moral of Lot's wife becomes more palpable when

we connect therewith the reference made to it by our Saviour, when he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. We live in a world that is yet to be burnt up, of which Jerusalem is the type. Let us flee from this coming wrath; and in turning to Christ, let us not look back, but be done with the world, and done with it conclusively.

27-38.—The feeling of Abraham might well be imagined when he arose in the morning and took a survey of the smoking destruction that he saw in the distance before him. The subject altogether would be a very fine one for the artist, though I know not if it has been attempted.

It would appear from *v.* 29, as if Lot owed his preservation to God's remembrance of Abraham. Yet Lot is characterized by a New Testament writer as righteous—(2 Peter ii. 7.) And indeed the delivery of just Lot, and the contrast between his fate and that of the wicked who vexed him, would intimate that God, in delivering him, had respect to himself personally.

The history which follows presents a strange picture of the times, and is of a piece with the trait in the immediately preceding passage, where, on the one hand, to maintain the obligation of hospitality inviolate, Lot hazards a most revolting proposal—that is, the prostitution of his daughters; and, on the other hand, these daughters, rather than incur the reproach, and what must have been then felt as the worst of evils, the extinction of a house or family, by all the members of it dying childless—prostituted themselves, and that in the most aggravated and atrocious way possible. The appearance of such a narrative might well be deemed an inexplicable phenomenon



in the volume of revelation, yet of no argumentative weight whatever against the genuineness or authority of the record. It favours the idea of a progressive morality from one period or economy to another—that progression whereof the greatest step took place at the time of our Saviour, and is announced by Him in His sermon on the Mount. (Matth. v. 21-48.)

GENESIS XX.—There again occurs here an act of deception on the part of Abraham, and no recorded censure thereof by God, who in His converse with Abimelech speaks of Abraham as a prophet, and whose prayer would avail for the preservation of Abimelech. The deceit is aggravated, I think, by the apology that is made for it. What Abraham said was substantially a falsehood, and had all the effect of it; and so far from a mitigation it is rather an enhancement of the artifice, the attempt that is made in v. 12 to give that saying the guise of truth. Is the moral education of the world progressive?

This whole chapter seems abundantly lucid excepting the sixteenth verse. The reproof perhaps lies in Abimelech designating Abraham to Sarah as her brother, making an ironical repetition of the name she herself gave him. His being a covering unto the eyes might well be a covering from or against the eyes of all, whether acquaintances or strangers. They who know that Abraham is her husband should keep their eyes from her; and this knowledge should not be kept from any as it was from Abimelech. All should know of her marriage relationship, that all might respect it. Abraham should stand betwixt her and all men.

There seems to have been no very strict rule of matri-

monial consanguinity in these days ; and perhaps this too might be laid to the account of that progression in the virtues and habits of God's own people which seems to have taken place from age to age.

GENESIS XXI. 1-13.—Sarah's laughter proves that on a former occasion it might not have been altogether a matter of incredulity. It could not be so now, or after the actual fulfilment of the promise which called forth her risibility at the time that it was uttered. There might have been a sense of the incongruous at both times.

The deference rendered by Abraham to the wish of Sarah, and that in opposition to his own very strong and heartfelt affection, is the symptom of a greater humanity and civilization in these days than we are apt to imagine. The subjection of the women, and a disregard to their feelings, are commonly regarded as marks and characteristics of barbarism. Sarah had a will of her own, and in the instance revealed here carried it. Yet we have the testimony of an Apostle for her right carriage to her husband. She stood in reverence, but not in dread of him ; and this very passage bears evidence that she was not afraid with amazement, (1 Peter iii. 6.) There was respect but not consternation.

The relations of the Old to the New Testament and its doctrines are now multiplying on our hands. The progression towards that great consummation, that day which Abraham saw afar off, is becoming more visible ; and the light struck out by a mutual interchange of notices between the two great portions of Scripture is now making the region on which we enter more luminous than before. Paul adverts to the preference by God of Isaac.



over Ishmael as a proof that electing love is irrespective of works. In Isaac shall thy seed be called. (Rom. ix.)

14-21.—Though I notice the former passage relating to Hagar as picturesque, this far exceeds it in that quality, and would form one of the most interesting of all our Scriptural pieces for an artist. It is most graphically and beautifully told; and the pen of the historian has supplied all the materials to the pencil for laying out the story in a visible representation.

The affection of Abraham is displayed in the early rising to see her away, and the acts of help perhaps which he rendered at the moment of parting.

There is the semblance at least of the Angel of the Covenant having interposed on this occasion, from a certain want of distinction in the narrative between God and the angel of God.

One cannot but feel an interest in Ishmael—figuring him to be a noble of nature—one of those heroes of the wilderness who lived on the produce of his bow, and whose spirit was nursed and exercised among the wild adventures of the life that he led. And it does soften our conception of him whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him, when we read of his mother's influence over him, in the deference of Ishmael to whom we read another example of the respect yielded to females even in that so-called barbarous period of the world. There was a civilization, the immediate effect of religion in these days, from which men fell away as the world grew older.

22-34.—This passage presents a valuable evidence of the effect which God's revelations to his selected few had in spreading a sort of secondary and subordinate light of

theology among those who were not the direct objects of these visits and communications from Heaven. And when we see that neighbours caught from Abraham a certain sense and knowledge of the true God, what may we not imagine would be the influence of his purer faith on relatives, and more especially those numerous descendants who sprung from him out of the loins of Isaac and Jacob, as the Ishmaelites ; and the families that arose from among the children of Keturah, and the sons of those concubines to whom he gave gifts, and sent eastward into Central Asia ; and finally, the children of Esau or the Edomites. There would thus be a strong and widely-diffused tradition in favour of the true God, the light of which underwent successive obscurations from one age to another, but was never, we think, wholly obliterated.

There is a great charm in the simple and venerable record of these patriarchal times, and which specially pervades the transaction narrated here between Abraham and Abimelech. If Abraham evinced his facility and forbearance in yielding to Lot, this did not wholly overbear his desire for justice, or restrain him from making a firm remonstrance to Abimelech because of the encroachments that had been practised on him.

I rather think that Beersheba is the first sacred locality noticed in Scripture. Abraham planted a grove there, and seems to have made a place of prayer—a *προσευχη*—of it, where he called on the name of the Lord.

GENESIS XXII. 1-14.—God did tempt Abraham, tried him, made an experiment on the strength of his faith.

His only son Isaac. (v. 2.) Yet he had another son Ishmael. But perhaps the only son whom he loved. Yet

the previous story gives no presumption, but the contrary, of his not loving Ishmael. Isaac, however, was the only son, as far as we know, at that time under his roof; and was probably the object of his most special and distinguishing affection. This feature in the case strengthens the typical application which has been made of this narrative to the sacrifice of Christ—the only beloved Son of God the Father who gave Him up for us all. But on the whole subject of types I am yet too unripe to say anything, though I trust that these Biblical exercises may bring me at length to a nearer acquaintance with them.

But apart from the typical use that has been made of it, this is one of the most illustrious narratives of faith and obedience in Holy Writ, even of that faith which the patriarch exhibited previous to the birth of Isaac, when against hope he believed in hope.

It would appear from verse fourteen that the mountain had been identified in later times. It was in the land of Moriah that the transaction took place; and it was on Mount Moriah that the temple was built. The verse would have been more clear had Jehovah-jireh been repeated instead of translated when it occurred the second time. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day—"In the mount of Jehovah-jireh."

15-24.—The approval and the reward which Abraham met with from God for his obedience, should relax the antipathies of that ultra-rigorous orthodoxy which looks frowningly on works, and would almost seem to forbid the performance of them. I fear that the effect of controversy and system in Theology has been to work a maladjustment between our minds and the representations of

Scripture, which will not be compelled into an accommodation with the artificial compends or creeds of any denomination. A remarkable example is the jealousy wherewith the disciples of the Evangelical School look on service, lest faith should suffer derogation thereby. In what perfect harmony do these two elements meet in the character of Abraham, who may be said to have personified the composition of the two, and is accordingly claimed and appealed to alike by two Apostles—by one when he is setting forth the part which faith, and by the other when he is setting forth the part which works have in our salvation. Let us proceed on the harmony of both; and for our encouragement to labour, let us know that our labour is not in vain.

The news of Abraham's distant kinsfolk give us a certain domestic feeling in him and in his concerns. There are fine materials for biography and a sketch of character in the records of this patriarch.

GENESIS XXIII. 1-12.—Altogether, the interest of this narrative of Abraham's life grows upon us as we proceed in it—ennobled as it is by the sublimities of the most exalted, and at the same time softened and made attractive by the implication therewith of all that is touching and familiar in the dearest of human affections. It attaches to him another claim upon our sympathies, when we behold him moved by the death of Sarah, and coming forth to mourn and to weep for her.

I have long been impressed with the dignified politeness of the patriarch as laid before us in this passage—with the discourses he made to the people of the land, and the repetition of which, as given in verse twelfth, falls

on my ear with the cadence and effect of high poetry. There is nothing in the etiquette of Courts and Parliaments, or in any of our forms of highest breeding, which so powerfully expresses the respect of man for his fellows. This, too, would make an admirable subject for the pencil.

The reception he met with from the children of Heth tells us, and impressively, of the might and consequence to which Abraham had arisen in this the prescribed land of his pilgrimage.

13-20.—He insisted on giving its price for the land; and this is of a piece with what is recorded of his disinterestedness in the fourteenth chapter, where he would receive from the King of Sodom none of the spoil which he had recovered for him.

The various particulars of this transaction evince very considerable progress at that early period in economics, in commerce, in law. There is money, and of a given denomination or coin—balances for weighing it—a standard thereof, such as was current with the merchant—a superiority therefore in the methods of trade above the way of barter—forms in the conveyance and exchange of property before witnesses, as here in the audience of the people of Heth—the terms and specifications of a bargain, by which its several particulars were made sure to Abraham in the presence of and before many witnesses;—all serving to confirm the doctrine that the progress in these days was from an original civilization down to barbarism—the civilization being coeval with the first and earliest revelations, or with Adam himself. A thorough attention to these early chapters of Genesis confirms our belief in this tenet—supported as it is by

this very strong negative argument, that a nation was never known to emerge simultaneously and unaided from the savage state—the civilization thereof having always, as far as is known, originated in or been aided by a movement or influence from without.

GENESIS XXIV. 1-9.—The Lord blessed Abraham in all things. He sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things were added. He had the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come. Though he sought for an ulterior country, and was but a stranger and pilgrim in the one that he traversed, yet did God bestow upon him a goodly heritage even on this side of the grave. In return for his self-denying faith he received a hundred-fold even in this life.

The Canaanites were odious and formidable to Abraham—an alien race, against which all the antipathies of caste were felt—yet was Abraham now willing that Isaac should remain amongst them, where the cherished and confirmed repugnance proved a greater safeguard against the contamination of their manners than would the fascinations of home and kindred against a like contamination by the idolatries of the east country from which Abraham had been called. And accordingly, Abraham strictly discharged his servant from taking Isaac to that country, in the event of the woman not being willing to go to him now in Canaan. He felt that by so doing he should contravene the purposes of God, who had called him away from his fatherland; and in obedience to whose voice he had left, and left conclusively both for himself and his elect family, the country that gave him birth. From verse seventh it would appear that Abraham had a strong



faith in the ministry of angels—a faith strengthened in all probability by his own familiar experience. It is interesting to remark how the theology that came to Abraham by direct revelation spreads and descends with a secondary influence to those of his own house and those among the people with whom he or his might hold converse.

10-20.—I feel great respect for this chief and confidential servant of Abraham, to whom he committed the charge of all his goods, and on whom also devolved the important mission of this chapter, of which he acquitted himself so admirably.

Altogether, it is a most picturesque narrative ; and the camels add greatly to the effect of the successive visions here placed before us. The representation it gives of primitive manners is quite beautiful.

But, theologically, the most important thing here is the prayer of the servant, in that it solicits an interposition from God, which was given, and had all the effect of a miracle—the servant seeking a sign and receiving it—God meeting, as it were, the prayer of an humble worshipper with manifestations of equivalent power to that of the credentials exhibited by a prophet or an inspired man. This might have been one of the ways in which God at sundry times and in divers manners kept alive a faith in himself at this early period of the world.

*December.*

21-28.—The man wondered and observed in silence. He recognised by this time a likely fulfilment to his prayer. Enough had transpired to fasten his attention on the damsel as her whom Providence had destined for his master's son. He held his peace, to wit, or to see and



observe whether the Lord had prospered his way or not. So distinct a counterpart as was now going on, to the utterance he had made a short time before, must have not only given him the comfortable assurance of a successful result, but must have greatly confirmed his faith in the Providence of God.

He recognised the hand of God in having thus conducted him to the kindred of Abraham, whither his master had directed him to go. What he had just prayed to God for, he now blessed and thanked God for. It is a notable peculiarity of his addresses to God, and occurs four times in this chapter, that he should designate Him as the God of his master Abraham. We can easily imagine how this might serve as the special mark or characteristic by which to distinguish the true God from the other gods that were worshipped in the country whence Abraham was called. It was through the call of Abraham that He became at all known to Abraham's household; and Abraham was the main object of all the providential dealings which God had with his family throughout the eventful history of their fortunes and their wanderings.

29-33.—One should look for a dramatic consistency in every true narrative of life or character; and perhaps if one were to prosecute Scripture biography for the purpose of testing the Bible by this criterion, one might find such artless and undesigned coincidences, such a harmony among all the traits even of a slighter kind that occur in the various passages which relate to one and the same individual, as might constitute a pleasing and additional evidence for the general authenticity of the sacred volume. We look on respect for wealth and station as a right and wholesome feeling; and how much or how little of this

may have been in the head of Laban, it were impossible to say. But certain it is, that though in him it had been a sordid affection, which inspired the attentions he showed to Abraham's servant after he had seen the ear-rings and bracelets which he had given to Rebekah, this would have been only in keeping with the unjust and mercenary and avaricious transactions which are recorded of him in after life. It is impossible, notwithstanding, to resist the impression, that Laban was not merely following the impulse of a feeling in the style of reception and entertainment observed by him to this stranger, but that he was acting in the spirit and manner of the prevalent hospitality of these times.

34-49.—The special reference, both in verse seventh and verse fortieth, by Abraham to an angel, to His angel, as if there was one that should be singled out from all the rest, is in keeping at least with the supposition that he may have been the Angel of the Covenant, to whose appearance and help Abraham himself was no stranger.

This narrative was fitted to leave on the minds of those who heard it, the same effect that a revelation from the mouth of a prophet with the credentials of a divine mission should have on those whom he addressed—in as far as the confirmation of their faith in a great unseen presiding Spirit was concerned. They could not believe the narrative without believing in the reality of a Divine intervention; and from the way in which such a manifestation was given in the present instance may we perceive how that God could keep alive the faith and piety of these early ages in a thousand other ways than by an express messenger charged with an embassy and inspired with light from Heaven.

It would be diluting the impression of this beautiful chapter, did we specify all the interesting traits which enter into the description that it sets before us.

50-67.—Laban and Bethuel recognised the thing as proceeding from the Lord, convinced thereof by the man's narrative of his prayer and its fulfilment. They saw that the Lord had spoken it, and this their recognition of the divinity would be strengthened by the devout obeisance of the servant when he bowed himself and worshipped the Lord. It is pleasing to note these manifestations of God to men, and their influence, at that period of the world.

In this passage Isaac is introduced for the first time, so as to make the reader in part acquainted with him. There is a most observable dramatic variety between him and Abraham—the father evidently a larger man in every respect, and of higher grade, so as to qualify him for the more arduous fortunes which he was called to encounter. Yet in Isaac there is something inexpressibly attractive. To him belonged the mild majesty of private life, and we figure his to be more a life of peaceful and domestic piety. It was probably in the spirit of religion that he went out to meditate at the eventide—a fine picture this for the imagination to dwell upon—a good and holy man of old walking forth among the beauties of nature, and engaged in the contemplation of Nature's God.

The interview is altogether beautiful; and before the chapter closes, we have certain other traits which should be collected and kept up for the purpose of completing our sketch of Isaac—the love he bore to Rebekah, and the grief he had felt for the loss of his mother—an abiding grief, and only dissipated by the transference of his heart to a new object—the wound inflicted on one domestic

affection healed by the replacement thereof with another—proving how much he was a family man.

GENESIS xxv. 1-11.—Abraham gave the bulk of his property to Isaac; and indeed probably all that he had at his death came to his son, as the gifts which he conferred on his other sons were bestowed on them while he lived, upon his sending them away to separate them from Isaac, in whom and through whom the greatest purpose of his own separation from the world was to be accomplished. The policy of keeping the Jews a distinct people was beginning to operate now, and perhaps earlier in the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from the household of Abraham.

The death of this truly magnificent personage—whose biography is altogether worthy of the Father of the Faithful—is recorded in suitable terms of venerable simplicity, quite in keeping with his character as the greatest of the Patriarchs. He gave up the ghost, died in a good old age, an old man full of years, and, most touching of all, both in simplicity and force—was gathered to his people. I feel convinced from the effect of my now more special attention, in sections and piecemeal, to the Bible, that I become far more intimate than before with the character of its recorded personages; and have no doubt that the biography of Scripture, if more fully studied, would be found not only replete with moral instruction, but would contribute to build up a distinct evidence for the truth of Scripture.

I am not so acquainted with the wilderness of Paran as to know its distance from the residence of Isaac. Ishmael, however, of whom we read last that he was an archer

there, was near enough to have been present at the funeral. The blessing of Isaac by God after Abraham's death may design a special visitation and renewal of the promise, or the general prosperity which he enjoyed under the Divine favour.

12-18.—I repeat that much might be gathered from a diligent study of these Scriptural names of persons, and comparing them with the names of places, whether presented to us in history, or still adhering to given towns or districts in the present day. We believe that much of evidence is still in reserve for us, and the extreme tenacity of Eastern habits is all the more favourable to the preservation of such evidence, which is beginning now indeed to be explored and set forth by our recent travellers.

And in like manner, Scripture geography is a study of great importance, and for which there exist abundant materials. It is a pleasing discovery when one is warranted to identify the localities which can be pointed to now, with those which are referred to in the Bible.

How I love the cadence of such descriptions as are given in the instances both of Abraham and Ishmael of their respective latter ends—gathered unto his people!

There are various interpretations of his dying in the presence of all his brethren. In ch. xvi. v. 12, it is said of him, that he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Did he live so near them, that he could easily join Isaac on the occasion of their father's funeral, and that Isaac could go to him and be present at his death?

19-34.—We seldom meet with Isaac save in a family or domestic capacity, as in verses twenty-first and twenty-eighth. Another prophecy set before us in this passage, and, like all the rest, signally accredited by the event.



The circumstance recorded here to have taken place at the birth of Jacob and Esau, is referred to in Hosea xii. 3.

But the most remarkable passage in these verses is at the conclusion of the chapter. I am inclined to associate the birthright with the great promise made by God to Abraham; and that he of the two sons who should possess it, was to be the ancestor of Him in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. It was this privilege which signalized Isaac from Ishmael—In Isaac shall thy seed be called; and it was this precisely which eventually signalized Jacob over Esau. I can easily imagine the greater faith and reverence which might be associated with the call of Abraham by certain of his descendants than others—as a feeling of the high importance of its object by Jacob, and a careless infidel disregard thereof by Esau—so as at once to justify and explain the character assigned to his part in the transaction, and who on account of it is styled the profane Esau. The younger was preferred of God to the elder: Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated; and in harmony with this we here see that what Jacob held in honour, Esau held in contempt. We cannot thoroughly approve of all that Jacob did in the matter; but he at least evinces a clear superiority to his brother in the religious view which he took of Heaven's purposes respecting their family.

GENESIS XXVI. 1-11.—We have here a renewal of the promise first made to Abraham, and now repeated to Isaac, whose birthright it was, and in whose posterity it was to have its fulfilment—even as it was the birthright also of Jacob to the exclusion of Esau. Let us note here, that

the fulfilment of this promise was in reward for the obedience of Abraham—another demonstration of the perfect harmony between faith and works, and the indispensable necessity for both.

It is remarkable that Isaac should have fallen into the same predicament with an Abimelech King of Gerar, that Abraham had done many years before him. The deception is recorded without any record of the Divine displeasure in either of the instances. We feel as if it were more venial in Isaac than in Abraham, from the greater softness and timidity of his character. In neither case, however, does it seem to admit of an absolute vindication. What was said by them of old time (Matt. v. 21, 27, 33)—and we may add what was done and it would seem as if allowably by them of old time—is not always what should be either said or done by the servants of God in the present day.

12-22.—The favour of God was more manifested then in the bestowal of temporal good things. The blessing spoken of here lay in the hundred-fold produce which he received from God to the increase of his wealth and greatness.

But while a child of prosperity, he was also a lover of peace. Though he had great store of servants wherewith to repel the aggressions of the Philistines on his property—yet he seems to have made no resistance against them—but seems successively to have given up one well after another, and though much mightier than Abimelech, to have resigned them quietly into the hands of his people. At length, however, they ceased from striving—and he seems to have realized in consequence—first, the promise that if our ways please God, He will make even



our enemies to be at peace with us ; and secondly, that the meek shall inherit the earth. The Lord made room for him, and he was fruitful in the land. Let this way of Providence, O God, temper the indignation I might otherwise feel at the injustice of others ; and lead me to commit myself to Him who judgeth righteously.

23-35.—In these renewed appearances and promises of God to Isaac, we behold the continuity of a great plan conceived in Heaven for the salvation of a guilty world. They mark the perseverance of Him who changeth not in that scheme which was first announced to Abraham, and carried onward throughout that line of descendants whereof Isaac was the first.

We have here another instance of sacred places, and sacred buildings, which seem to have been very early resorted to by the worshippers of God.

The passage between Isaac and Abimelech represents our patriarch in the amiable light of a kind, placable, hospitable, and truly good man. The mixture of the pacific with the prosperous in Isaac renders him a peculiarly pleasing object of contemplation.

His chief pleasures and chief pains were those of domestic life ; and the grief of mind he felt for the misconduct of Esau, marks further the alien feeling that he had towards the people in whose land he sojourned—in harmony with what Paul tells us of the patriarchs, that they confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The sympathy of Rebekah in their common grief stamps a yet more domestic character on the mind of Isaac and its emotions.

GENESIS XXVII, 1-10.—One follows with interest this

meek and good old patriarch; and cannot fail to be impressed by the representation of him as now blind and desirous of finishing an important transaction ere he should die—quickenened thereto by a sense of his age and infirmities, and his uncertainty how soon he might arrive at the end of his days. One does not just see the fitness and far less the necessity of Esau bringing in venison that his father might eat of it ere he would pronounce a blessing on the son of his love. And yet this he was ordered to do in order that the soul of Isaac might bless him. It is all very well what Matthew Henry says, we mean just in point of general sentiment, on this passage—yet we can scarcely sustain it as an adequate explanation of the transaction recorded therein. The reasons of Matthew Pool are more satisfactory; but I need not repeat them here—excepting so far as to say that his first reason seems to me the likeliest of his three, viz. that it was the custom for some office or service to be performed by the son ere the great and final blessing was pronounced or executed in the style of a bequest by the father.

It is worthy of remark, that Isaac obviously meant by the blessing that Esau should be lord and Jacob should serve him; and the inference from this is that Rebekah had kept to herself the Lord's prophecy before the birth, that the elder should serve the younger—a piece of reserve quite analogous to the other traits of her duplicity and dissimulation. One knows not how to estimate the morale of this whole transaction. There is something worse than simple deceit on the part of a mother. There is a mother making her own son a party therein.

11-24.—Let us separate in this passage what is divine from what is human. It was God's purpose that Jacob

should inherit the blessing, and this was made known to Rebekah before the birth of her children. This purpose was not defeated by the perversity either of him who was the immediate object of it, or of her to whom the communication had been made. He who brings good out of evil, or who accomplishes His own good purposes in spite of the evil which man mixes up either with the remote or proximate causes which have to do with the fulfilment, is not to be held as approving of the highly reprehensible conduct either of Jacob or Rebekah in this matter—of her who planned the deception or of him who put it into execution. It aggravates the duplicity of Jacob ten-fold that he should give a reply of such daring hypocrisy to the question how he had found the venison so soon. It is like the addition of perjury to falsehood thus to allege, as he does in verse twenty, that the Lord God had brought it to him—meaning, no doubt, to make Isaac believe that he had been providentially successful in his day's hunting.

It is difficult to imagine the direct efficacy of a prayer drawn out of Isaac in such circumstances and by such means. The literal answer to such a prayer is not a virtual answer to the real prayer as it came from the mind of Isaac—for what he desired and prayed for was for these blessings to Esau, not to Jacob; and we cannot figure the effect to be changed merely from the deceit which led the patriarch to put his "Thee" and "Thee" on a wrong object. It may perhaps be regarded as a prophecy rather than as a prayer—of which Isaac misconceived the meaning, as other prophets often did, and more especially Caiaphas, in that prophecy of which he was the vehicle.

25-29.—The interference with Esau lies in the twenty-

ninth verse, "Be lord over thy brethren." There is nothing in this blessing of the promise made to Abraham ; and this confirms our view of the birthright as having respect to that sacred distinction, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed—a distinction which Esau despised. The blessing, on the other hand, seems confined to secular matters ; and is such as any man of ordinary wealth and power might have pronounced on his favourite son with a single view to the increase of these. This view of the birthright and the blessing being two distinct things is confirmed by Esau's indignant and well-merited complaint against his brother for having supplanted him two times—having first taken away his birthright and then his blessing. Both were predestined by the good purpose and in the counsels of God—yet the fraudulency of man interposed to help them forward—and what He destined must of course be accomplished, whether this fraudulency should have interposed to help or to hinder it. It seems mysterious that Jacob, who was privileged with both these singular benefits, should have been permitted to compass them as he did by such unworthy means.

30-46.—The almost feminine tenderness of Isaac is manifested in verse thirty-three, while at the end of it, when he says, "Yea, and he shall be blessed," he affords ground for believing that his blessing of Jacob was not a supplication but a prophecy ; and that his knowledge of it having been an inspiration from Heaven overrules his preferences as a man. By faith, it is said, (Heb. xi. 20,) Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, so that the Divinity was in this transaction, and a sense of this must have been in the mind of the patriarch.

One thoroughly sympathizes with Esau, and enters both

into his grief and indignation. Yet we must not let the sentiments of nature so conflict with the feelings of piety as to overcome them, and to overshadow the right religious view of this matter. There was a mixture of human worthlessness on the side of Jacob ; but on the same side also was there a divine ordination, and the exercise, too, of a righteous government in disinheriting of the blessing the same Esau who had despised his birthright, and so all his supplications and tears were of no avail to him.

The hatred of Jacob by Esau was quite natural. The management of Jacob's departure by Rebekah was done with her characteristic policy.

GENESIS XXVIII. 1-9.—Isaac, obviously on the suggestion of Rebekah, sent away Jacob, that is for the reason suggested by her, though not for the reason which operated on her—she with her usual policy substituting the one for the other. It is remarkable that in this fresh blessing which he pronounces on his son, he makes mention, which he did not before, of the blessing of Abraham to be given to him and to his children. The two blessings, then, are just as distinct as the first blessing was from the birthright, which last I apprehend to have been the blessing of Abraham now incorporated with the second blessing, because now fully recognised to be the distinct inheritance of Jacob—in whose seed, and not in that of Esau, all the families of the earth were to be blessed. The birthright had also a special reference to the land of Canaan, which God gave unto Abraham, and which Jacob was to inherit. There is another good natural trait here recorded of Esau. The chronology quite justifies, or rather leads to the conclusion, that Ishmael was still alive when Esau married



his daughter. Abraham was eighty-six when Ishmael was born; and Ishmael must have been eighty-nine when Abraham died. (xxv. 7.) He was fourteen years older than Isaac; and therefore fifty-four years old when Isaac married. He lived eighty-three years after this, which allows ample space for all that is recorded of Esau up to his marriage with Ishmael's daughter. For it would appear that though Isaac was blind and old when he blest his two sons, yet he must long have survived this transaction—seeing that between this and his death there took place the long servitude of Jacob with Laban, and it would appear also the birth of all his family. But it is unnecessary to pursue these dates. We are expressly told that Esau went unto Ishmael. There was a kindredness of condition, probably of taste and habits, between the father and son-in-law. Both were rejected off-shoots from the direct line which led downward to the birth of Christ; and we can well imagine a community of feeling between them toward the preferred and favoured branch of the house from which they sprung.

10-22.—Jacob went toward Haran, the midway place between Ur and the land of Canaan—at which Haran Terah died and left his descendants, and from which Abraham was called. In the memorable passage which follows, the ladder of communication between earth and heaven has most naturally and warrantably been the subject of many pious and good reflections, both on the systems of providence and grace, as carried forth by the ministry of angels ascending and descending to execute the errands of God, who sits above and orders all things. The inheritance of the land is here made sure to Jacob, and the blessing of Abraham expressly awarded to him—thus

confirming the high birthright in him and in his family—"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." There is something very solemn in the emotions of Jacob on awakening from his dream, and he is thoroughly to be sympathized with in the expressions of piety which were consequently called forth. His vow, and the consecration of the place where the transactions happened, are all in keeping with the occasion. The dedication of a tenth of what he had, carries down the evidence for the obligation of tithes through the patriarchal ages.

Altogether, this is one of the most select and interesting portions of the Old Testament.

GENESIS XXIX. 1-11.—Although Isaac in blessing Jacob charged him, as Abraham did in his own case, against taking a wife of the daughters of Canaan, he expresses no such solicitude for his return from Haran as Abraham did lest Isaac should be taken there, and so go back and settle in the country whence he himself was called. Jacob is not charged against settling there; and there was good reason in the wrath of Esau for not urging a premature return. But with this diversity in the outset of the two matrimonial expeditions, there is a remarkable analogy in the two arrivals of Jacob and Abraham's servant at Haran—for not only did they come to the same city, but probably to the same well, where the same scene of pastoral and ancient simplicity is acted over again. The interview with Rachel is quite a counterpart to that with Rebekah; and the emotions of the two strangers are the same and alike natural—those of the elder, Abraham's servant, being of a graver and more solemn character than those of Jacob, whose sensibilities were more vivid and



tender. There was a providence in both ; and we recognise in them the similar dealings of God with the patriarchs of two generations.

12-25.—It may appear a trifling and puerile remark ; but I must confess myself much interested by the identity of human nature in its more familiar working at very distant periods of the world. Rachel *ran* to tell her father, (v. 12)—Laban *ran* to meet Jacob, (v. 13)—Rebekah *ran* to tell her mother, (xxiv. 28.) It is a minute, some would say, a ridiculously trifling thing to single out ; but I like to contemplate human nature in the stability even of its lesser evolutions—the same as now thousands of years back. When a child is filled with any strong emotion by a surprising event or intelligence, it runs to discharge it on others, impatient of their sympathy ; and it marks, I can fancy, the simplicity and greater naturalness of that period—that the grown-up men and women gave unreserved way to their first impulses, even as children did. One cannot help thinking that this family at Haran must have been a wily, politic, deceitful set. Laban was characterized by it all over—Rebekah had her full share ; and we can detect no small spice of it in their descendants—as in Jacob on the one hand, and Rachel on the other. There seems to have been a very unformed morale among them ; and, besides this, there was great avarice in Laban, who was altogether of a very harsh and repulsive character.

26-35.—There is a dramatic consistency between the various passages in the history of Laban. He alleges the custom of his country in vindication of the deceit which he practised upon Jacob. But it would appear from the twenty-seventh verse, that he looked for additional value in

return for his second daughter, and required a prolongation of that service, which it would seem, from a subsequent remonstrance of Jacob, had been highly profitable to him. There must have been a very gross morale in these days on the subject of marriage. According to our notions, the guilt of polygamy would be greatly aggravated in being married to two sisters; and the giving over of their maids to Jacob, completes the contrast of sentiment and practice between the reputable families of ancient and modern times.

I am interested by the distinct reference made on the occasion of every birth to God. It is certainly one of the most affecting of all His providential dispensations; and it is pleasing to observe such a degree of theism in a family where idolatry had made entrance, as called forth Leah's expressions of piety on each delivery of a son, and as doubtless also served to strengthen and confirm the piety still more.

GENESIS xxx. 1-13.—The natural piety of the mother was also felt and expressed by Jacob on the subject of these accessions to his family—children being regarded as direct gifts from Heaven, and barrenness as a direct infliction by the hand of God. One can imagine how it was that in that early period of the world, a numerous progeny was felt to be an acquisition and not a burden; and that thus fertility in mothers would attach an honour and esteem to them. It is curious, however, that the disgrace of barrenness on the part of wives should have been felt in any degree alleviated by what may be styled the vicarious child-bearings of their servants. And the very substitutions of these servants for themselves, affords an-

other specimen of the rudimental and imperfect morality of that period. Among other things, it probably marks that a state of servitude in these days was a state of slavery—or at least a state of complete ownership—servants, and their children too, being the entire property of their mistresses. And, accordingly, we find Rachel sending up the same grateful acknowledgments for these children of another, as if she herself had brought them forth.

14-24.—There has been much controversy about Reuben's mandrakes. All seem to agree that they were plants. Let me here record my esteem of Professor Paxton, who has bestowed much study on the Natural History of the Scriptures. I look, too, on the Pictorial Bible as being very intelligent and rational on what may be termed the secularities of Holy Writ. One cannot but be struck with the extreme simplicity of these earliest narratives respecting matters over which in our modern days the veil of delicacy would be thrown.

At length Rachel bears children in her own person. She gives utterance to the same pious recognition of the hand of God as when children were borne to her by Bilhah. But from her saying at the birth of Joseph, it is obvious that she did not feel her reproach taken away till she had herself borne a child. The prophetic announcement to her of another child is worthy of observation. On a similar occasion God did communicate with Rebekah (ch. xxv. 23,) and seems also on this occasion to have made Rachel the subject of a supernatural intimation. God made Himself known in divers manners at divers periods of the world; and who knows but that in many unrecorded ways He may have kept alive the impression

of Himself, and that in thousands of such instances as are here laid before us.

25-30.—This passage throws light on the policy of Laban in palming Leah upon Jacob. One object of it may have been to prolong the benefit of his services. He here admits the experience that he had had of his value, which in the spirit of that practical theism that seems to have prevailed in that age, he ascribes to the blessing of the Lord, who had favoured and prospered him for Jacob's sake. Meanwhile, there had commenced, and most naturally, a heart-burning within the breast of Jacob, who had certainly been treated with the utmost injustice by his uncle Laban—while, at the same time, he seems neither disinclined nor disqualified for paying him back, if not with the same gross injustice that he had received, at least in a way that was not perfectly unexceptionable. In the embryo morality of that period, there may have been gradations of the unfair and the dishonourable even as there are now. Laban seems a man capable of the most barefaced dishonesty; but we cannot acquit Jacob of having recourse to sneaking artifices more than once for the promotion of his own selfishness; and what aggravates the misconduct is, that he ascribes that prosperity to the favour of God which he tried to help forward by devices of his own. It was of God's counsel, even that counsel which shall stand, that Jacob did attain to the sufficiency which he realized; and he had better have refrained from his own politic expedients for securing a provision for his family.

31-43.—Yet we have not quite sure data for forming our estimate of Jacob's character. It is perhaps true that Laban in making the separation of which we read in *v.* 35,

did a dishonest thing; and set Jacob on his shifts to repair the disadvantage he was placed under with that part of the flock which had been consigned to him. And perhaps it may not have been his own shift after all—for if there be truth in the statement of next chapter which he made to his wives, he may have received direction from God. It is true that he associated that name with a falsehood (ch. xxvii. 20) when he practised on his father Isaac; but it is hard to imagine that he should have gratuitously done so in the conversation of next chapter. Let Jacob have the benefit of this uncertainty—and this notwithstanding the revolt we feel at the distinction he made between the stronger and the feebler cattle, for the direct advancement of his own interest, and the as direct prejudice of Laban's. Altogether, our notion is very much confirmed as to an immature standard of virtue in these days—not that we have a higher morality, but a higher rule of morality than in the patriarchal ages of the world. "You have heard that it was said"—not done, but said—"by them of old time; but I say unto you," &c. They had a worse system of virtue in these days, even though at present we should fall short of them in practice. They had an inferior schooling to what we have now—a dimmer moral light—whether they were before or behind us in actual observances.

GENESIS xxxi. 1-13.—It is patent from these verses that God intromitted with Jacob in the matter of his leaving Laban. It is absolutely stated in verse three. And I am disposed to rely on the statement of Jacob himself in regard to his dream, and therefore in regard to the part which God took directly in the transaction between him and



Laban. The doctrine of the Angel of the Covenant meets in this passage with a strong corroboration. It was the angel of God who spake to him in his dream. But this same angel says, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar," &c. The mention of this would verify the supernatural character of Him who thus addressed him. But the instruction to us is that the angel, as being identified with the God of Bethel, must have realized all the ascriptions of Divinity which are given to him in the narrative of what took place there. We turn back then to that part of the record; and we read of this angel that he was the Lord Jehovah (ch. xxviii. 13); that he was the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac—so that when Jacob awoke, he said, "surely Jehovah is in this place; and this is none other but the house of God." Give me to honour the Son even as I honour the Father—and to rejoice in these precious manifestations of the divinity of Him who is indeed my God as well as my Saviour. Let me live in the blessed faith of Christ all the day long.

14-21.—We have here in greater relief than ever the character of Laban brought out—by the complaints of his own daughters against him. And indeed, there seems to have obtained a very coarse morale throughout his whole family. If even in the more sound and refined household of Abraham we meet with violations of strict rectitude, we need not wonder if told of still more glaring delinquencies among the more heathenish society out of which he was called. There seems to have been among them a curious composition of idolatry with the recognition of the true God. We have already witnessed the effusions of piety on the part of Leah and Rachel at the birth of each child; and it is difficult to reconcile this with the

image-worship which seems to have prevailed amongst them, and more especially the affection of Rachel for images. Or if it be not clear that she worshipped them, it is at least clear that she stole them; and this is quite of a piece with the rude and unshapen morality of these ages.

22-35.—Laban recognised the God who spoke to him in a dream as the God of Jacob's father, *v.* 29, but complained that his own gods had been stolen away, *v.* 30. Is this the facile polytheism of the heathen world? and is it this which reconciles the knowledge that Laban had of the true God with his habits of idolatry? He evinces his hypocrisy in his style of addressing Jacob—pretending that he would have let him away in terms of friendship and honour, and that his only displeasure was felt at the method of his going away so as to prevent this. The complaint of his gods having been stolen was followed up by a crafty and politic expedient on the part of Rachel, which might claim the palliation of fear, but still which confirms our feeling of revolt from the character of a family, so many of whose members evinced a low, cunning, disingenuous trickery, from which Jacob, a maternal descendant of the same house, was not altogether free. Let them be our beacons, and not our examples.

36-42.—There is a deal of nature in this free and indignant outbreak of Jacob's—restrained by the fear of a detention that might have involved some of his family; but, when that fear had passed away, and its operation as a check was removed—then the sense of injury, kept under till now, comes forth in loud and open remonstrances against him who had inflicted it. It is this trueness to humanity which stamps an authentic character on the



whole narrative. Once the tongue of complaint is loosed, it takes full scope, and over and above a remonstrance for the present, it makes a reckoning for the past, and goes forth on the grievances and provocations of the years that had gone by. The suppressed and struggling resentment finds vent in a loud appeal to the author of these multiplied wrongs, the recital of which gives a sad exhibition of Laban, as a hard and heartless oppressor who dealt most exactly and cruelly with his own son-in-law. I think it a fine trait that Jacob, while he complains of his long service for his two wives, and of the changes that had been made upon his wages, does not complain of the worst of these changes—that was the change of Leah for Rachel. By this time his own affection for Leah might have restrained that complaint, or at all events he may have kept silent on the subject from a regard both to her feelings and to those of her children.

*January 1, 1842.*

43-55.—I understand Laban here (verse 43) to be bearing himself up against the power of Jacob's remonstrance—first, by a firm assertion of his right in all that Jacob claimed, but, that after having put on this face to save his own confusion, he gives in, conscious that his case is not a good one, under pretext at the same time of great natural affection for his family. I have a right to do what I will with my own, but what can I do with my own children? There is great naturalness in this exhibition. He, after having thus cleared his way, proposes that they shall part as good friends. He continues to say kind and fatherly things, but in the tone and with the authority of a father. It is a remarkable expression where Jacob says of God that he was the fear of his

father Isaac—all the more remarkable in verse twenty-fourth, that he is signalized in this respect from Abraham, and in verse fifty-third from both him and Nahor. May we infer from this a more reverential piety as the notable characteristic of Isaac's mind ?

GENESIS XXXII. 1-12.—The meeting of the angels with Jacob strikingly marks the important place he held in the purposes and plans of the Divine administration. And it is also well that the confidence which they were fitted to inspire did not supersede the utmost effort and providence on his part to provide against the hazard of the approaching interview with his brother. It may have superseded fear, but not activity—but the fear got the better of him ; and it took the right direction when it led him to prayer. The union of prudence with prayer is the dictate of an enlightened piety. It was right in him to take the likeliest measures for his safety, and pre-eminently right in him to betake himself to supplication. And the conduct of his prayer was good. It was good to remind God of his promise, who likes to be pled with in this way ; and so would I plead and supplicate, O God. Raise me from my fall. Quicken me from my spiritual lethargy. Defend me against my spiritual foes. Remove from my spirit all its deadness and heaviness and incapacity for prayer. I most assuredly am not worthy of the least of Thy mercies. Yet let me pray without ceasing for pardon, and comfort, and confirmed holiness.

13-23.—Having finished his prayer, he betook himself to performance. The prayer was answered, not without the means, but by a blessing on the means. Esau was pacified by the God doubtless to whom Jacob prayed, but

through the measures which Jacob adopted for this pacification. There was the intervention, and rightly, of several causes—which Jacob, as became him, put into busy operation—having previously supplicated his deliverance from God. It is the union of diligence with devotion which prospers and perfects all that concerns us. We must not despise or neglect instrumentality, but while as dependent as if God did all, we should be as diligent as if ourselves did all. Accordingly, observe the calculation and the arrangements of Jacob for appeasing the mind of Esau; and he was appeased causally and efficiently by God, yet proximately and intermediately by the presents which were laid before him and found acceptance in his sight. He did not venture to meet Esau till the present had gone before him. There might have been a tempting of God in such an experiment. Piety and wisdom seem duly and happily blended on the part of Jacob throughout the whole of this transaction.

24-32.—Jacob, after having made his arrangements, fell back again on prayer; and thus should we, even to wrestling with God—asking till we receive, seeking till we find, knocking till the door be opened to us. In this remarkable passage we have no doubt that the lesson held forth is the prevalence and power of importunate supplication. From the passage itself, though the struggle be there represented as between Jacob and a man, yet it was a man who could confer a blessing, and of whom Jacob said that he had seen God face to face. But the testimony of Hosea is still more explicit, when, instead of a man, He is named an angel over whom he had power, (Hos. xii. 4,) which power is in the third verse called power with God, and which angel seems in the fifth verse to be expressly

named the Lord God of Hosts, the Lord Jehovah. This then, we have no doubt, is the Angel of the Covenant; and that the wrestling represents prayer is most obvious from the lesson wherewith Hosea follows up his allusion to this transaction. "*Therefore* turn thou to thy God, and wait on thy God continually." This continued waiting is continued wrestling. It is a resolute perseverance in all the acts and exercises of devotion. May God forgive the prayerlessness of my former history, and pour upon me the spirit of grace and of supplication.

GENESIS .XXXIII. 1-11.—Jacob goes back again from prayer to practice, from importunate and successful entreaty at the throne of grace to the busy plying of all those prudential expedients which tell by the ordinary laws of experience with greatest effect on the hearts and among the habitations of men. And this is quite as it should be. Esau was moved and melted into tenderness by a responsive influence no doubt to the prayer of Jacob from on high, but still through the secondary and subordinate means which Jacob did well in putting into busy operation. The successive appliances, first of the costly gifts, secondly of his own personal appearance, and thirdly of the successive presentations of his family, were all exceedingly well devised on the part of Jacob; and one cannot help admiring at the same time the exhibition of Esau. He had many good points and properties about him, such as when we look at we cannot but love. Constitutionally, and as viewed in the light of a natural man, there was much to like and to admire in him. Nor can I sympathize with Matthew Henry's tendency to run him down. Yet let us not forget that the Apostle

characterizes him as profane Esau. And let us view in him another specimen of one in whose behalf we might allege many things, yet was lacking in the one thing needful. One likes the tenderness which he evinced at the meeting, and the generosity wherewith he parried off the magnificent donation of his brother, though he at length gave in to the proper urgency of Jacob.

12-20.—There are further indications here of Esau's native generosity on the one hand, and of Jacob's caution, I will no longer call it craft, upon the other. But I can well imagine that he might feel after all a certain uncongeniality with his brother, and therefore no great unwillingness to be left alone, though he puts it on the necessity he is under of proceeding tardily upon his journey. He seems also to decline by his "What needeth it?" the offer of some of Esau's men to attend him; but tempers all these negations with expressions of the utmost courtesy and most reverential deference for his brother. We do not read of the fulfilment of his promise to meet Esau at Mount Seir. Yet the visit may have been paid though not recorded. The building of altars and consecrated places in these patriarchal days, prior to the establishment of a national religion, is to me interesting as a primeval sanction to our modern churches; and had we fuller information, we might probably have learned of these places being frequented on Sabbaths for the observance of religious exercises peculiar to that day. Jacob here takes the new name that had been given to him, though the old one be still used by the Sacred Historian. El-elohe-Israel—God is the God of Israel, God is my God.—Heavenly Father, enable me thus to appropriate and lay hold of Thee as my own.



GENESIS xxxiv. 1-10.—This painful narrative abounds in lessons of wisdom and propriety, and strikingly shows how the order of the world, and the great interests of justice and humanity, are essentially bound up with the virtues of chastity and self-control. The criminality of that which is not so powerfully or immediately suggested by a man's own conscience, receives many an appalling demonstration from the results in outward history, which thus often gives fell confirmation to the pure and strict and high morality of Scripture. We may observe here the dangers of an idle curiosity, such curiosity as brought out and exposed Dinah to the gaze of her seducer. Without palliating his offence, it must be said of him that after he had fallen into it, his subsequent conduct admits of a favourable comparison with that of many other heartless debauchees; doing his best to repair the outrage, and enlisting his father in the attempt to make good an honourable alliance between the families. We might easily conceive, however, that such an alliance may have been followed up by consequences subversive of the great design that God had in separating the children of Israel from all other people; and that such a commerce of mutual dealings and mutual confidence as Hamor points at may have worked a very pernicious amalgamation of the sound and selected family with the world at large. And the same God who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, often makes the wickedness of man instrumental for the furtherance and establishment of his greatest and highest designs. In the silent grief of Jacob, the father, and the dark and fierce indignancy of his sons, we can observe the external securities which the Governor of men has placed around the honour and innocence of females.

11-23.—Shechem's unabated affection interests one in his favour. And the largeness of his offers savours of generosity, so as to prepare us for the testimony of his being more honourable than all the house of his fathers—though this term may mean illustrious in the general, unconnected with moral honour. At all events, we are sensible of a contrast with him, in the conduct of Jacob's sons, who, making every allowance for their outraged feelings, acquitted themselves most detestably in this whole transaction. The allegation of a religious principle in the proposition which they made just makes it all the more atrocious; and they stand forth in an aggravated likeness as the genuine descendants of the maternal family whence they sprung. There was something quite diabolical in the deceit wherewith the plot was constructed, and the appalling cruelty of its termination—when a hecatomb of innocent men and families was offered up to appease their vengeance. Altogether, it was a most revolting tragedy.

24-31.—And we have here the fell perpetration of it—exhibiting a most odious compound of deceit and cruelty, and lastly of avarice. It is not unlikely that Simeon and Levi, though the only sons of Jacob who took part in the actual execution of this enormity, might have had a retinue of servants and attendants along with them. But be this as it may, one shudders at the contrast between that confidence which Hamor and Shechem reposed in them, and the way in which they followed it up—putting both father and son to the sword after or along with the wholesale slaughter of all their subjects. And after the work done by these two—the men of blood, there came the other sons of Jacob and acted the men of plunder—adding



robbery to the assassination which had been perpetrated before. Dinah, it would appear, must have been all the while in the house of Shechem. A desire for her recovery then must have been added to the resentment for her dishonour, among the motives which might be alleged to palliate though not to justify this dark deed of violence. It is satisfactory to find that Jacob did not participate in the guilt of this villanous enterprise. He was naturally a man of craft but not of cruelty. I should look for both policy and fear in him, but for none of the fiercer vices of our nature. It is fear which is the animating spirit of his remonstrance ; and one can sympathize, too, with the professed principle of his sons' vindication, though not with the horrible vengeance to which it carried them.

GENESIS xxxv. 1-15.—Jacob should not have needed to be reminded of the vow he made at Bethel when he fled into Padan-aram. We have here God's own express sanction for the setting apart of special places for divine service. Along with the altar there may have been a house, as in ch. xxviii. 22. What a mongrel sort of theism there must have been in Jacob's family, with their strange gods over and above the recognition and worship of the true God. The demonstration which the sons of Jacob made at Shechem might well have made them objects of terror to the people of the land, had they been of adequate numbers and strength to have the mastery over them. But it not being so, the terror came upon their minds directly and supernaturally from God, or rather the object of their terror was God, under whose special care the family manifestly were. One likes the respectability of the patriarchal servants—Eliezer and Deborah. The

verse which records her funeral is a most interesting historical notice. In this fresh appearance and blessing of God, the "again" of the ninth verse may denote the second appearance since his arrival in Canaan, the first being recorded in the beginning of the chapter; or rather, the second since he had left Padan-aram, the first being on his journey, when he wrestled with God—it being alike remarkable with the present appearance, and the intermediate one being but an intimation simply. The name of Israel is disclosed to him a second time for his encouragement. Jacob was no longer to be his only name—not that it was not to be his name at all. God himself names him Jacob, (Isaiah xlv. 4,) "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect." The company of nations may signify the tribes of Israel. There was probably some notable manifestation of the Divinity in the act of ascending, which Jacob commemorated by a pillar raised on the spot. All this was done at Bethel.

16-29.—The account of Rachel's death is one of the beautifully touching passages in Sacred Writ. Her pillar, referred to many years afterwards by the Historian, and known by her name, is an example of the monumental evidence.

We see the patriarch named indiscriminately Jacob or Israel. What a coarse and hard-favoured family he had. He heard of the enormity of Reuben; and one imagines that he might have held his peace as he did when he heard of Dinah his daughter. There is something very impressive in such silence, but the feeling broke out on his death-bed—when he made the crime here recorded the subject of his most emphatic denunciation. All but Benjamin were born in Padan-aram.

One is pleased to meet once more with good mild venerable Isaac. He must have spent a very long old age from the time in which he blest his sons to Jacob's return, and considerably after it—for he survived the sale of Joseph by his brethren. It is interesting to think of Isaac as the living grandfather of that family. There is no Scriptural character which I love more to dwell upon, or in whom I find more of that gentleness and repose in the contemplation of which there is something inexpressibly soothing and delightful. Peace and blessing upon his memory.

GENESIS xxxvi. 1-14.—Esau got also the name of Edom from his redness. And it was this second name which distinguished his posterity. There is great intricacy in the genealogies of Esau, arising from the change and apparent transference of names. I make no attempt to unravel it. I will not attempt to reconcile the second and third verses of this chapter with ch. xxvi. 34, or with ch. xxviii. 9. There are even difficulties presented in the comparison of these two verses with what occurs in the same chapter before it is ended. Certain it is that names or numbers are liable to be greatly blundered in the process of transcription. The separation of Esau and Jacob could not have taken place previous to Esau's first connexion with or visits to Mount Seir; for thither he went on parting with Jacob as he was journeying from Padan-aram to Canaan, and Jacob promised to join him there. After this, however, they seem to have both lived in the land of Canaan, where there arose a necessity similar to that which separated Lot from Abraham; and then it was that Esau, who before had some interest in

Mount Seir, made at length his full and final settlement there.

Innumerable are such proofs as we have in verse twelfth that the line of demarcation between a state of marriage and a state of concubinage was often trampled under foot ; and that there was no very clear or high moral estimate of the difference between them.

15-19.—It seems quite obvious that these dukes were not supreme magistrates—for so many of them were contemporaneous, and did not succeed each other. The dukes of the fifteenth and sixteenth verses were all of them brothers—the sons of Eliphaz, and so also were the sons of Reuel and the sons of Aholibamah. The sons of these three formed the first generation of dukes, and probably transmitted their titles and possessions to their posterity. They formed, it is probable, the aristocracy of the land of Edom, which aristocracy to be maintained in adequate wealth and power would have required a law of primogeniture—respecting which I am ignorant whether it subsisted or not.

The sons of Esau here spoken of were born to him in the land of Canaan. (verse 5.) Of the descendants of the two first it is said that they came of their parents in the land of Edom, and neither Eliphaz nor Reuel are called dukes. Whereas the first descendants of Aholibamah, the immediate sons of Esau, are called dukes. We should imagine from this, that when the dukes were first constituted after the removal of Esau and his whole establishment from Canaan to Mount Seir, that Eliphaz and Reuel were dead or superannuated ; but that Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah were still alive, and were made dukes along with the rest of the third generation who were their nephews

20-30.—There is an intricacy in these verses which I shall not attempt to reduce, presented by the names of Zibeon and Anah. In the first place, Anah, in verse 20, is called the son of Seir a Horite and brother of Zibeon. In verse second Anah is the daughter of Zibeon a Hivite. In the next place, Anah is the son of Zibeon the Hivite; and what is still more puzzling, Aholibamah, in verse 25, is the daughter of this Anah the son, whereas in verse second an Aholibamah is daughter to Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite. At all events, Esau seems to have had relatives through his wife among the Hivites. The dukes of whom we read in this passage were distinct from the Edomite dukes. They are the Hivite dukes. And an aristocracy seems to have subsisted of these, too, previous to the entrance of the Edomites on Mount Seir. The *mules* that Anah found in the wilderness form but one of several translations from the word in the original. The most likely of these translations makes them Emims or giants, of whom we read elsewhere, whom Anah fell in with. See Deut. ii. 10.

31-43.—There is a difference of opinion as to the time specified in the thirty-first verse, whether before Moses who was king in Jeshurun (Deut. xxxiii. 5,) or of Saul. If the latter, this clause must have been an interpolation. The catalogue which follows is one of Horite kings, who succeeded each other. So that there must have been a monarchy along with an aristocracy of Horite dukes in that region. Esau and his descendants may have long been mere settlers in the country before they obtained the ascendancy—meanwhile living by their sword. They had however a monarch of their own nation by the time that the children of Israel were on the eve of finishing their



travels in the wilderness. What a brief record of a whole dynasty is here given—a war being discussed in a single clause. (verse 35.) It would seem from the different towns that these kings had lived in, and from the fathers of several of them being distinct from their predecessors on the throne—that theirs had been an elective monarchy. The Edomite dukes whose names close this chapter were in distinct localities, and may have transmitted their titles to their respective posterities.

GENESIS XXXVII. 1-11.—Let me not enter on the vain attempt to enhance the impression of this celebrated story by any forthsetting of mine. I would only interpose a few notes on some of its clauses. The patriarchs confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims in the land. (Verse 1, and Heb. xi. 13.) “These are the generations,” or rather these are the events in the history of Jacob—not the genealogy, but the occurrences—such things as his day *brought forth*. (Prov. xxvii. 1.) The same in ch. vi. 9, and in Numbers iii. 1, in both of which what follows has in it more of history than genealogy.

We shall not speculate on the substance of Joseph’s evil report—that being all conjectural. We have sufficient proofs of the misconduct of Jacob’s sons to believe that there would be no want of materials for the accusation of them.—An odd taste in these days for what would by us be regarded as a deformity.—These may be well called prophetic dreams; and indeed the whole of this narrative forms one of the most striking exemplifications of a Providence in the affairs of men that is to be found in all history. His mother had been dead some time before, so that though the moon be introduced into the



second dream, Jacob must have made too minute an interpretation of it; or perhaps he brought in the mother as a refutation of the dream. There are various solutions of this difficulty. There is something very impressive in the silent thoughtfulness of Jacob. It is like the pondering in her heart by Mary (Luke ii. 19.) of the things that were told her. This is the third time in which Jacob is introduced as thinking what he did not speak, but laid up in silence. It accords with the policy of his character. (Genesis xxxiv. 5. ; xxxv. 22.)

12-22.—The departure from Shechem to Dothan was providential. It brought the sons of Jacob into the line of the Ishmeelites' journey to Egypt. What mighty events hinge on the concourse of human beings with each other; and how insignificant often are the motives which determine the movements that are necessary for this concourse—proving God to have the ascendancy in littles, and that He often directs these for the accomplishment of the greatest of His purposes. In verse twentieth we see murder and falsehood projected by one counsel. They had already proved their capability for both. The relenting of Reuben, and for the purpose, too, of restoring him to his father, speaks for the constitutional softness of his character. But how lamentable to think that the same sensibility which makes one yield to the feelings of compassion is often allied with the weakness that yields to the temptations of sensuality or licentiousness. Both the one and the other might be referable to pathology; and both stand alike dissociated from principle—the one, indeed, opposed to principle and the other unconnected with it. The solution here is so far in keeping with the previous enormity into which he fell, that we

can well understand of Reuben—notwithstanding he did better by Joseph than all the rest of his brethren—how still, and in despite of this, he, unstable as water, did not excel.

23-36.—Judah seems to have been the most influential among his brethren—as would appear from this passage, and also from his being their spokesman in Egypt. It would appear that Reuben was not present when this proposal was made and acted on, and it must be said for him that his purpose was to return Joseph in safety to his father. Though the enormity was mitigated, in as much as they passed away from the murder to the sale of Joseph, they perpetrated the same falsehood in the narrative which they gave of it to their father that they proposed to do when they had resolved on putting him to death. Jacob was led, as much in the one way of it as he would have been in the other, to believe that some evil beast had devoured his beloved son. They committed a less cruelty than they had first intended on the person of Joseph, but the very same cruelty on the feelings of their father, whose grief, as here portrayed, forms one of the most affecting passages in the story. They must have disguised the matter, too, from Reuben, the eldest brother, as well as from Jacob.

GENESIS XXXVIII. 1-10.—There is here interposed a chapter which exhibits the coarse and ill-regulated morality of the age; nor does it appear that there remained much to signalize the family of Jacob above the people around them, who were given to every abomination. One is impressed with the sense of a rapid degeneracy from the days of Abraham and of good old Isaac. It would

appear from the fate of Er, who was ostensibly cut off because of his wickedness, that there was a sensible theocracy in these days too, as over the children of Israel when they became a nation. We can imagine how the raising up of seed might be regarded in these days as a great patriotic and social duty, when the state of the world both admitted and demanded a larger population. That would not be the ground now on which the offence of Onan would be deemed an enormity—an iniquity to be punished by the judges. But in the absence of the economical, there are the high moral and spiritual considerations suggested to us by the Gospel of Jesus Christ—which goes to the root of all such delinquencies—which proscribes the desires as well as the deeds of licentiousness—which tells us of lust, however gratified, that it wars against the soul; and not only bids us mortify the *deeds* of the body, but also mortify the affections which be upon the earth.

11-23.—It would appear from verse eleventh, as if Judah apprehended the death of his remaining son, like that of the others, were he given to Tamar; and therefore practised a deception upon her by inspiring a hope which he disappointed. (verse 14.) It was very gross conduct on the part of Tamar, though in part instigated thereto by revenge and an appetite for justice. She far outpeered even Judah in the enormity of her licentiousness—his being a case of single concubinage, ignorant as he was of his relationship at the time—hers a case of known and deliberate and projected incest. But we must not palliate his misconduct, from which we may learn a lesson of temperance and caution. The previous festivities in which he had been indulging with his friend

and among his sheep-shearers, had probably made him more accessible to the temptation that presented itself by the wayside. It were interesting to know precisely the object of Judah's shame—whether it was the exposure of his crime or the exposure of the trick that had been played upon him. One would almost fear that in that age there was no disgrace attached to the crime—however much the neighbours might have laughed at the success of the imposition that had been practised upon Judah.

24-30.—This severe sentence of Judah on Tamar, who had only been a sharer in that guilt of which he himself must have been conscious, would argue that in these days there was a similar estimate to what is current now of the relative culpability of men and women when they fall into licentiousness. It is remarkable, however, that he should hold her fault to have been so much extenuated by the plea or palliation which he advances for her—though it is probable that he was glad to compromise the whole matter by passing away from it altogether as a thing that involved his own disgrace as well as hers. I have often thought of it as wonderful that this incestuous transaction should form one step of that chain which led to the birth of our Saviour. I observe that it is spoken of by commentators as a thing that deepens his humiliation. I feel as if, in associating himself by relationship with such an atrocity as this, that his redemption descends as it were to the lowest depths of human guilt and depravity. I feel my need of such an assurance for the encouragement of my own faith. It casts a light on the infinite mercy of God; and makes me to feel in this alliance of the transcendental with the terrestrial in its

grossest form, that God's ways are not as man's ways, and His thoughts are not as man's thoughts.

GENESIS xxxix. 1-5.—We are now engaged with a narrative which in all the steps of it bears an obvious aspect of Providence. It is remarkable that Potiphar saw the Lord to be with Joseph, evincing a degree of enlightenment in natural theism which one would scarcely have expected in Egypt. But after all, there had not many generations elapsed from Noah; and the longevity even then was such as to perpetuate in a certain degree that knowledge of God which subsisted in a certain degree in the earlier of the patriarchal ages. And there is much in the whole history of Genesis to convince us that civilization was not a thing of growth in any country from a state of barbarism; but that there was an aboriginal civilization coeval with the knowledge of the true God, and which declined in proportion as that knowledge was obscured. The progress of this matter has been the reverse of what is very commonly imagined. The civilization degenerated along with the enlightened religion of the people; and there is great probability in the assertion—that never did it spontaneously arise from a state of barbarism in any land; but wherever it existed it was imported from abroad.

6-23.—May God visit me at all times with the reflection of Joseph, when assailed by temptations of any sort—Shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Thou knowest all my weaknesses. O strengthen me. May I, in the humble sense of my own infirmity, ever look unto Jesus, that His power may rest upon me. And save me, O God, not from the misdeeds of the outer man only

but from the waywardness of the inner man, so miserably apt to wander in the mountains of vanity. Turn away my thoughts, as well as my sight and eyes, from that which is evil, and enable me to maintain a resolute and holy warfare against the wrong affections which war against the soul. Let the guardianship of an approving God ever encourage me to that which is right. A delight of the inner man in His law would leave all the less room for any root of bitterness within. May God create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me.

GENESIS XL. 1-15.—The narrative sustains throughout the character of a providential history—but mainly of a providence carried forward by the operation of visible and secondary causes. There was nothing beyond the ordinary processes of nature, as far as human observation can extend, in the circumstances which led to the imprisonment of Joseph, and to that of Pharaoh's butler and baker. Even in their dreams an observer could have discovered nothing of the miraculous; and with the exception of that knowledge by which Joseph was enabled to interpret them, we can observe no traces of a special interposition from on high. The whole of this narration, then, serves strongly to exhibit the doctrine of a Providence as embodied in common history; and so let us recognise the presiding and directing will of God in all the circumstances around us, and in all the events which pass before our eyes. It is further quite worthy of remark, that while Joseph recognised all interpretations to come from God—and though therefore his confidence in his own interpretation must have been associated in his mind with a certain degree of assurance that God was with him in a signal and extra-



ordinary manner—this did not prevent him from drawing to the uttermost on human instrumentality for the effecting of his deliverance. This is just as it should be—dependence on God, along with diligence in the use of means. We may well suppose that he prayed importunately to his unseen Father in heaven for his liberation; and yet this did not supersede his importunities to the butler for his good offices with the king.

16-23.—There is something piteous in the case of the poor baker; and the feeling is enhanced by the eager hope which prompted his request for Joseph's interpretation of his dream.

And there is as little of the sensibly marvellous in the restorative process which took the butler and baker out of prison, as in the former process which carried them there—though it was a determining Providence which fixed every footstep of both. There was nothing beyond the ordinary play of interests and passions in a court that any common observer could have discerned—in the birthday feast, or in the restoration of the butler, or in the execution of the poor baker, or lastly, in the forgetful ingratitude of the butler. It is to be remarked of this last, that Joseph's request made to the butler availed him not—verifying the maxim that there is no help in man. But God worked for him—only in His own time. Let us wait with patience the disappointments and delays to which human treachery might expose us—assured that God will sooner or later bring His own counsel to pass; and that though the devices of man's heart are many, this counsel will stand.

GENESIS XLI. 1-9.—This was a great prolongation of

Joseph's imprisonment—presuming that the two full years compose the interval between the butler's discharge and Pharaoh's dreams. It was, at all events, such an interval as called for a certain stretch of recollection from the butler when he said, as in verse ninth, "I do remember my faults this day." We must wait God's own time for the fulfilment of His gracious designs. The river could not be mistaken in Egypt—though no name should be given to it—sure to be recognised, and the only one that would be recognised, when spoken of thus generally. The mention of seven ears blasted with the east wind would make me desirous of ascertaining if such be the effect of the east wind now upon growing corn in Egypt; and if so, I should deem it an interesting coincidence with this narrative if that took place between three and four thousand years ago. The visitation of Pharaoh was such a notable intromission on the part of God with the affairs of the king and his kingdom, as should have helped to refine and purify his theism.

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10-16.—For his was a theism of an obviously corrupt and degenerate kind—upheld by the diviners and magicians of his court, and destined now to suffer a correction by the exposure of its weakness, in the helplessness of its office-bearers, and the practical triumph over them of him who was a servant of the true God. The sudden elevation of Joseph from a prison to a palace, though obviously in his instance done by the finger of Providence, is yet in harmony with the many similar events which occur in the history of Eastern despotisms. One is pleased to remark, that when the butler speaks of Joseph, it is not of him as a prisoner, but as the captain's servant—reminding us of

what is told at the end of the thirty-ninth chapter, and giving us the comfortable thought that his state all the while may have been one of tolerable ease and respect; and this notwithstanding its being said that he was brought out of the dungeon. It is well that Joseph on his first presentation to Pharaoh appears before him as a witness for God. It was tantamount to a revelation by the mouth of a prophet; and should have told on Pharaoh and his court as such.

17-32.—In the recital of Pharaoh to Joseph, there are additions made to the direct historical description of the dream some verses before, and such as accord very well with the communicativeness that might naturally be expected in the circumstances: as when he says of the lean kine, in the nineteenth verse, that they were such as he had never seen in Egypt for badness, and when he further states, in the twenty-first verse, that when they had eaten up the fat kine, it could not be known that they had eaten them, being still ill-favoured as at the beginning. The precise kind of difference, the precise additions made by Pharaoh to the account of the dream, are such as might be looked for from him, rather than from the historian—that is Pharaoh's statement of his own recollection that he had never seen the like before; and also his statement of his own observation while dreaming, even that the lean kine were to all appearance as lean as ever. The variations, though minute, or rather because minute, have in them a certain internal evidence. It is well to observe how Joseph testifies for God throughout his interpretation. What a lesson should this interpretation and its speedy undeniable fulfilment have held forth to the king and people of Egypt—as bearing the obvious demon-

stration of a God who ruled over the world. The doubling of the dream carried the intrinsic evidence in itself of a divine interposition.

33-39.—Joseph, we have no doubt, spoke in the simplicity of his heart, under the divine guidance, and without any anticipation of his own coming preferment. We find in verse 38, as the effect of this whole manifestation, a recognition by Pharaoh of the Spirit of God. We are aware that this phrase may well be conceived, in certain passages of the Old Testament, to indicate the third person of the Trinity. Not so here; and even though it had the resemblance of this, what could have been the value of such a testimony from Pharaoh? Pharaoh and Potiphar seem to have been frequent names in Egypt. But what or who was On? The city Aven, we are told by Poole, mentioned in Ezekiel xxx. 17. And instead of a priest, Potiphar may have been a prince—the governor of that city. The name given to Joseph by Pharaoh signifies a revealer of secrets. “In handfuls,” variously understood; perhaps a handful of grain from one seed. In verse 48 there occurs a clause which perhaps indicates the distribution of the population being in cities instead of separate farm houses and cottages, though an agricultural country. “The food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.” The land belonging to every city was probably cultivated by its people; who though citizens may yet have been husbandmen—going forth on their separate portions, very much as they do now in France from their large and populous villages.

50-57.—It may be observed that Joseph observed the practice of Jacob’s wives in uttering some recognition, and generally of thankfulness to God, at the birth of each

of his children. These utterances indicate the amount of suffering and affliction which he had endured since he was sold into Egypt, and would therefore lead me to modify what I say under the head of ch. xli. 10-16, of alleviations which Joseph might have received of his lot as a prisoner. He probably had great toil in the office laid upon him there; and altogether he designates Egypt as the land of his affliction. The succession of the seven years of plenty by seven years of famine should have given all the weight of a prophecy to Joseph's interpretation, and therefore strongly held forth the lesson of a God. The reference by Pharaoh of the people who came to him with the representation of their wants, ought still more to have enhanced their respect for the God of Joseph. And by this time it should have been all the more favourable to a right and religious influence on their minds, that now the day of their prosperity was passed, when it was natural for them to forget—and that their day of adversity had begun, when it was natural for them to consider. The expression in verse 56 does not necessarily imply that the famine was universal throughout the world. It would not convey this meaning, had the translation, instead of all the earth, made the famine to be over all the land. But we learn from verse 57 that in point of fact it did extend at least to the neighbouring countries. The famine was sore in all lands within the cognisance and reach of Egypt. We see in this another pathway for the diffusion of some sense and knowledge at least of the true God over countries beyond and at a distance from Egypt.

GENESIS XLII. 1-9.—There is a diversity of opinions as to the precise import of Jacob's question. It impresses

me with the idea that the sons of Jacob had been casting at each other looks of despair, expressive of feelings too big for utterance on the subject of their approaching starvation, which was coming nearer and nearer, and which, without some active measures that none of them liked to propose or break ground upon, would be inevitable. Jacob himself at length tabled the only expedient by which they could be saved. It is interesting to note his retention of Benjamin, as if he had transferred the special affection he had for Joseph to the remaining son of Rachel, and who was still more emphatically the son of his old age. We cannot but remark in the interview with Joseph the signal fulfilment of his own dream. We can scarcely account for Joseph's first reception of them, but on the ground of his acting under a Divine guidance. Certain it is, that it had the effect of giving further accomplishment to the dreams which Joseph, in the ninth verse, is said to have remembered, and as if it were upon this remembrance that he charged them with being spies. This had the further effect of hastening their repentance. We cannot perfectly account, however, for the *reticence* of Joseph, or for his reiteration of a charge which he must have felt to be not well-founded, or for his affected unbelief of their statement regarding a younger brother. It is the conviction that he did act by a direction from above which prevents us from insisting upon these questions.

10-24.—The oath used by Joseph, though variously explained away, is so obviously an oath, that I take it as such, and regard this as another evidence of much being winked at in former ages, even among God's people, which is short of the now perfected standard of Gospel morality. Joseph's profession in the eighteenth verse would be readily



taken up by his brethren, who recognised the true God in contradistinction to the gods of the world around them. The workings of conscience, and the consequent talk of the brethren among themselves, make up one of the most affecting passages of the whole story—especially as followed by the emotion of Joseph, which proves that all the feelings of his nature were on the side of his brethren; and this serves to demonstrate that in all the assumed sternness which he practised before them, he acted not spontaneously, but by an external guidance. Reuben's observation proves that they had kept up from him the fact of his being sold, even as they did from their father, for he speaks as if Joseph had indeed been slain, whether by a wild beast or by his brethren. There are many conjectures by commentators why Simeon was selected to be bound rather than any of the others. Our answer is, that we do not know—often the best answer which can be given to many such questions. It is a better-founded observation, however, that Joseph bound him before the eyes of all the rest, to keep up the impression among them of his character as the Governor of Egypt, and to disguise his fraternity; and that perhaps he may have remitted this severity to Simeon after the rest had gone.

25-38.—It is pleasant to see their recognition of God in that which had befallen them—pursued, as we have no doubt they were, by a guilty conscience, under the discipline of which they were kept so long for a wise and salutary purpose; and it would seem as if it were to aid in the accomplishment of that purpose that Joseph, in opposition to the tendencies and the relentings of his own nature, adopted measures which served to frighten and to perplex them.

Yet what may thus have proved a wholesome probation to them, could not fail to distress Jacob, who had no participation in their crime, but suffered intensely from it, and now suffered and was a partaker in their punishment. But there are manifold analogies to this in God's moral government of the world.

It would appear that only one sack had been opened during the journey—it probably containing as much as would suffice for maintenance by the way. It was not till they reached home, and till all the sacks were opened, that they made discovery of the money being restored to each of them. We cannot read of Jacob's sorrows without unmingled sympathy. We forget in his present trials the faults of other days; and can perceive that he was the object of a father's chastisement—perhaps administered to him because of his former transgressions of a father's will. This second good appearance of Reuben is not out of keeping with the frailty which led him to a flagrant iniquity many years before. Frailty and feeling are quite compatible with each other. He seems to have had little weight in the family—like one unstable as water, and who did not excel.

GENESIS XLIII. 1-14.—Judah seems to have been the man of most weight amongst them. When the movement to Egypt had to be decided on he was the spokesman, even as he was the spokesman for his brethren with Joseph. There is a deal of dramatic truth in the converse between him and his father—first in the complaint of Jacob for being dealt ill with, and secondly in the vindication of Judah—"could we certainly know," &c. The processes of feeling and reasoning are the same in all

ages. Yet it does not appear from the prior narrative, that Joseph put the questions which Judah alleged he did. Judah's suretiship was more available than that of Reuben's two sons. But indeed there was no alternative. There was a *must be* in it, before which Jacob had to give way; and his reluctant submission to the dire necessity is laid before us in a style of most natural representation. The parting blessing is very impressive, and so is the prospective resignation of the old patriarch to whatever may befall him.

15-25.—Joseph was evidently under a double influence—first, that of his own natural feelings, which would have prompted an instant outflow of cordiality on his brethren, and more especially on Benjamin, who had not any part in the conspiracy against him, and for whom, as his full brother, he felt special and intense affection; and, secondly, an influence which kept this in check, and which guided him through the steps of a very gradual denouement for some high purpose of wisdom and moral discipline. Now this latter influence I would refer to a higher source than Joseph's own reason, and believe that he acted by an influence on his spirit from above. We may observe in verse 18 how much the fears of guilt haunted the minds of the brethren. Not that they were guilty in this particular thing; but a sense of the great and notable guilt which they contracted many years ago, brought a general feeling of insecurity along with it. O God, keep me from the great transgression!

They hasten to vindicate themselves to the steward. One feels interested by his reply—by his recognition, more especially, of the God of the Hebrews. There was a freedom made by him with truth, I suspect, when he told

them that he had had their money—a freedom not unfrequent in those days among the patriarchs themselves.

26-34.—This passage lets us more into the workings of that internal struggle between two opposite influences, which was in the mind of Joseph. And certain it is that it must have been a very violent constraint upon himself, to have kept the visible composure he did when putting these questions respecting his father. He was fairly overcome, however, by the presence of Benjamin, and immediately after the greeting which he poured forth upon him, had to retire immediately to hide his emotions. There must surely have been a great tendency and temptation towards the immediate divulgement of himself; nor can I imagine that this was counteracted by any natural foresight or calculation of his own. The experiment he made on the feelings of his brethren, by setting them down in the order of their ages, was no doubt fitted to interest him. Whether it was this interest which prompted him so to arrange them, I have no doubt that all his eyes would be about him—that his powers of observation would be quite awake—and that he could read the astonishment of his brethren in their countenances and manner. I should think, too, that the whole conduct of the entertainment—not to omit the way in which Benjamin was signalized—was fitted to impress them with the idea of something supernatural; and that this operating on consciences already smitten with the sense of a great delinquency, was fitted to have a salutary effect on their painfully and closely-exercised spirits. Still, however, it was not under any anticipation of such a blessed result that Joseph took his measures, who seems to have acted throughout by a higher wisdom than his own.

GENESIS XLIV. 1-13.—It was surely by a great effort of self-command, and under the dictation of a strong influence from some quarter or other, that Joseph could thus prolong the suspense and consequent affliction not of his brethren only, but of his father also. It was for the immediate purpose of bringing back Benjamin that he fell on the new device set before us in this passage; nor can we imagine that he *naturally* foresaw either that the brethren would return along with him, or still less the evolutions which took place afterwards. But the curious part of this especial transaction is the strange sort of semi-paganism which he instructed his steward to keep up in their eyes, by professing himself to be a diviner, which pretension indeed he afterwards advanced in their hearing—when he lifted up his personal remonstrance to themselves as they stood before him.

Their conscious innocence of the thing charged against them, well warranted them to speak thus confidently. They were brought back under what may rightly be termed false pretences; and it is very striking how much that style of policy was practised even by the favourites of Heaven at that period of the world. Butler's explanations, however, may be sustained, as covering all those instances wherein the Divinity himself expressly or sensibly interposed. Verse 13.—They laded every man his ass—that is, lifted up the sacks upon them which they had just taken down to the ground. They had all been searched from the eldest to the youngest; and if in the precise order of their seniority, it might serve to strengthen the supernatural impression which the whole was fitted to stamp upon them.

14-17.—It being noticed that Joseph was yet in his

house, marks his frequent and lengthened absence from it. We read that in the years of plenty he traversed all Egypt (ch. xli. 46;) and it is not unlikely that he would be much abroad in the years of scarcity also. Their falling before him on the ground seems to indicate a lowlier prostration than they had ever made before—(ch. xlii. 6; xliii. 26)—first with their faces to the earth, and then only to, not on the earth. The dream thus obtained a more signal fulfilment; and, indeed throughout, the conduct of Joseph seems to have been overruled by Heaven for its own direct purposes, rather than adopted by him for any purposes of his own: else it were difficult to explain his object in detaining Benjamin and sending away all the brethren. Could he possibly wish to inflict such a blow on his own brethren, or mean that Benjamin should live with him, while Jacob and the rest of his family should live in the land of Canaan? When Judah says that God had found out their iniquity, he means more, I imagine, than the present supposed iniquity of Benjamin. They were haunted, I have no doubt, by the recollection of their great transgression in the matter of selling Joseph; and this effusion of Judah was an outbreking of conscience.

18-34.—We can imagine nothing more perfect than this address of Judah for the object of overpowering the sensibilities of him to whom it was spoken. In simplicity and touching pathos it excels every composition I ever met; nor can I figure a combination of traits and circumstances more fitted to tell on the heart of Joseph, and to operate as a fit precursor for the emotions which he could no longer repress. The most effective of these references were to his father, an old man; and the child of his old age, a little one; and the death of the brother, and the



love borne by Jacob to the only surviving child of his mother, now taken from them. Then there was Jacob's conjecture of him who was torn in pieces, and his saying, that if the other should be taken from him, his gray hairs would be brought with sorrow to the grave. The expression of these things is varied in the course of the address, but so as to give additional intensity and power to the representation: such as Jacob's life being bound up in the lad's life; and Judah's entreaty to be detained instead of Benjamin—for he could not look on the evil that was to come upon his father. No wonder that Joseph, unable longer to contain himself, should burst forth into a flood of tenderness at the time he did. Estimated as a mere literary composition, we can see nothing to equal this in Sterne or Shakspeare or Mackenzie, or any of the greatest masters of eloquence and poetry.

GENESIS XLV. 1-15.—It is interesting to observe the identity of nature, even in its minuter traits, at different and far distant periods of the world. One can enter into the dislike that Joseph would have at the exposure of his sensibilities to the observation of the Egyptians—though he could not so far repress them but that they heard what they did not see. One can well understand the tribulation of the brethren when the announcement was made to them; and cannot but admire the amiable solicitude of Joseph to allay their disquietudes and fears—putting it on the determination of Providence, and bidding them no longer regard it as a deed of their own—a very fair consideration for him to urge in pity to his brethren, but not fair in any man to urge as an apology for himself, which were an Antinomian abuse of the doctrine of Predestina-

tion. It was truly amiable in Joseph to expatiate on the good which had been done by their instrumentality—though all the while it was God's good brought out of man's evil. The whole history should have had the effect on their minds of a Divine revelation ; and indeed Joseph sustained, and fully acquitted himself of, the character of a Prophet, when he foretold in their hearing the next five years of famine. The kind message he sent to his father, and the outpourings of his affections on Benjamin and the others, are of a piece both in pathos and exquisite sensibility, with the rest of this charming narrative.

16-28.—The pleasure it gave to Pharaoh is quite in nature, and marks the interest he felt in Joseph, and the regard he bore him. I like the pleasure felt by the servants. The thing told both on the sympathies of the heart, and the delight one has in the wonderful. The outgoing of Pharaoh's benevolence is quite in keeping with the occasion ; and we can enter at once into the largeness of his generous proposals. This direction of Joseph that they should not fall out, should not quarrel, was probably suggested by their contentions in his own hearing respecting the share which they had in their maltreatment of himself —(ch. xlii. 21-22.) He wanted all this to be buried in oblivion, and that as he had forgiven them, so they should make it up with each other.

The concluding verses make up a very affecting portion of the narrative, full both of truthfulness and tenderness. The first effect of the news on old Jacob is quite in unison with humanity ; and so is the revival of his spirit on beholding the wagons, and the delightful utterance which proceeded from the lips of the happy father—"This my son was dead and is alive again—he was lost and is found."

GENESIS XLVI. 1-7.—By this time the offering of sacrifices seems to have formed at times a part of the public religious services of the patriarchs, and at certain consecrated places too. Beer-sheba was the place where Abraham planted a grove, and called on the name of the Lord, (Gen. xxi. 33;) where he dwelt, (xxii. 19;) where Isaac found water, (xxvi. 33;) and where Jacob now offers sacrifices. And God acknowledged his sacrifices by meeting him there. The Divine interposition here marks the continued providence that carried forward this whole history, and characterizes it as a progressive scheme passing onward to the great fulfilment in which it terminated. It must have been a timely encouragement to the old patriarch, and served to uphold his faith in the promise made first to his grandfather, that his posterity would surely inherit the land of Canaan . . . . Joseph will put his hand upon thine eyes; he will close thine eyes. Thou wilt die before him, and so have the comfort of his society during the remainder of thy days . . . . Jacob was a man of large possessions; and as the chief wealth of those days lay in cattle and movables, it must have been altogether a very operose transportation.

8-27.—In this account of Jacob's descendants one is struck with the smallness of the families—more especially as there seems to have been some polygamy among the sons. There seem to have been four great-grandchildren in the list through Judah and Asher. Another remarkable thing is the small proportion of daughters. We only read in particular of Serah the daughter of Asher. And yet in the general account sons and daughters are spoken of—though the male descendants alone would make out nearly the whole enumeration . . . . If it be singled out as a noticeable thing in Simeon that one of his sons should

have been of a Canaanitish woman, does not that imply that such an alliance was not common? And if so, where did the sons of Jacob get their wives? Certain it is, however, that one of Judah's children, Shelah, was son to the daughter of a Canaanite . . . . It should always be borne in mind that names and numbers are especially liable to error in the transcription of them. The threescore and six are exclusive of the wives, and exclusive also of Jacob. The addition of Joseph and his two sons, if Jacob be included, makes out the threescore and ten. The threescore and six do not take in Jacob, for this is the number of those who were with Jacob. The threescore and ten do take him in, for this is the number of Jacob's house, himself being the head of it.

28-34.—One would like to know if the present geography of Egypt accords with this passage, or if the land of Goshen, on the way it may be presumed from Canaan to the Nile, be better adapted for sheep and cattle than the lands on the side of the great river . . . . The interview between father and son is most affecting; and the profuse sensibility of Joseph in perfect keeping both with human nature, and with all the exhibitions of tenderness which had previously been given by him . . . . Perhaps there may have been some religious antipathy to shepherds on the part of the Egyptians, these worshippers of animals; though they do not appear to have degenerated so far into a brutal idolatry at this time as they did afterwards. There are traits of theism recorded of Pharaoh and his servants, which look as if they had not altogether lost their hold of the primitive religion of the world. It is most important, however, to remark, that when nations were left to themselves, the process has been one of declension,

agreeably to the account given of it by Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans. The abomination of shepherds by the Egyptians may, however, in part be resolved into the contempt which large aggregates of distinct people have for each other's occupations.... The banks of the Nile were of first arable quality; and formed a grain country much larger than it is now, because of the encroachments made upon it by the sands of the desert. Cattle-feeding or cattle-keeping would of course be little if at all known there; and with the natural tendency of each community to plume themselves on their own employment, they might have got into a habit of disparagement and despute towards the pursuits of others who were so distant and so different from themselves.

GENESIS XLVII. 1-10.—The exuberant kindness of Pharaoh speaks powerfully in his favour. Joseph had evidently maintained himself in the highest possible respect and good liking with the king and with his domestics. The proposal to make some of Joseph's brethren rulers over his cattle, seems to have had as much in it of grace and benignity towards them, as of regard for his own advantage.... The interview between Pharaoh and Jacob is simply and impressively told, and would make a fine subject for a picture. How much higher in our estimation is a patriarch or prophet than a monarch! Jacob blessed Pharaoh; and without all contradiction, says Paul, the less is blessed of the better. (Heb. vii. 7.) Let not this, however, detract from our reverence for the station of king, and in no way for our respect for Pharaoh, who is set before us in a way that is very prepossessing.... That is a solemn and impressive testimony which Jacob delivers



in his hearing on the subject of the brevity of life and its vexation and vanity . . . . Jacob was the most tried of all the three—we mean himself, Isaac, and Abraham. There was great variety in the life of Abraham, but without any signal checks on his road to prosperity and greatness ; Isaac's seems to have been a mild and pacific course ; but Jacob's a life of great danger, fear, hardship, and deep family distress.

11-26.—I should like to be more versant in Scripture geography—to know, for example, how Rameses and Goshen are understood to be related to each other.

What a laborious superintendence Joseph must have had ; what a multiplicity of concerns, and which we have reason to believe that he conducted with great wisdom—to the satisfaction of Pharaoh, and so as to command the respect and acquiescence of the Egyptians at large . . . . The most important step in the process described herein, is that by which the property in land passed from its owners to the sovereign. One is not quite sure of the object that Joseph had in removing the people from their old localities—probably to disjoin them from their old and now alienated possessions, and save those heart-burnings which the sight or the proximity of what had now been wrested from them might otherwise have awakened, and so as to endanger the tranquillity of the state. When the land was restored to them with the burden of one-fifth of the produce as a rent to the king, we may well suppose this to have taken place at the end of the famine, and several years after they had surrendered it—for we find that Joseph set them agoing with seed, which would have been thrown away had it been sown previous to the expiry of the famine. We are not to suppose, however, that the people who had been removed to cities were all drafted



back again to their original possessions. It would seem a better policy to have given each proprietor land that was new to him, and with which no feeling nor remembrance of its being at one time their own unburdened property could have been associated. What they got would thus be felt more as a gift, and accordingly it seems to have called forth the grateful acknowledgments of the Egyptians. The fifth of the produce was a moderate rent, considering the fertility of the soil in Egypt; but if well collected would have yielded immense riches and power to the kings. One should like to meet in the history of Egypt, by other authors, with the traces of such an economy.

27-31.—We here read of the commencement and first years of that prosperity of the Israelites which provoked the jealousy of a future king of Egypt. One can imagine, however, that their affliction was preceded by a very bright interval, which not only saw out Joseph, but all his brethren. These alternations of fortune may, under the government of a God whose schemes are comprehensive of many generations, succeed each other often by very long periods.... There is a simple and solemn grandeur in the description of the approach of Jacob's death, who now appears in all the more venerable form when presented under the name of Israel, and in the character of an old patriarch. The name sheds upon him a national greatness, as it gave birth to the appellative of the people who sprung from him. Jacob exacts an oath from Joseph in the usual form—the same with that which Abraham imposed upon his servant. (ch. xxiv. 2.) What a natural beauty in the request that he should be laid with his fathers! Canaan was the home of his affections—the burial-place of his ancestors—and the future dwelling-place of his

posterity.... The difference between the Hebrew and the Septuagint is well known on the subject of Jacob's prostration. The latter is adopted by Paul. It is generally understood to have been an act of religious homage. As read in our version, there is both a grace and a sublimity in the movement—most touchingly simple, yet expressive too of a certain dignity and moral greatness—as preparatory to the last earthly sayings of one upon his deathbed, charged with a high prophecy which reached onward to distant generations.

GENESIS XLVIII. 1-7.—Strengthened or elevated by the prospect of this interview, and perhaps by the influence of the prophetic spirit wherewith he was evidently actuated, he summoned up an effort and resolution for the occasion before him. And he evidently speaks from an overflowing fulness—which, were it not for the solemn and affecting nature of the topics, one might characterize as the garrulity of age. But it cannot be so named, for he is telling his sense of God's mighty plans and purposes in the calling of his family, and making them the depositaries, as it were, of the greatest and highest interests of our species. He is reminding Joseph of his interest in the land of Canaan, and claiming from him his two sons—who must be taught to look not on Egypt but on Canaan as the future house of their prosperity, instead of looking to the formation of a house or an establishment in that land where their father had attained to such greatness and honour. Jacob seems to prophesy that Ephraim and Manasseh would, like his own immediate sons, be the heads of distinct tribes in Israel. Whatever other children Joseph might afterwards have had, they were to be merged

into the two tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. He tries to awaken in the heart of Joseph a tender interest in the land of Canaan, as the burial-place of his mother Rachel.

8-22.—There is a Flemish accuracy in the eleventh and twelfth verses—a truth of nature in its minutest traits; and a fine tribute to the parental right in the prostration of the Governor of Egypt before his aged father. . . . Jacob, in the guidance of his hands, willingly showed himself to have been under prophetic inspiration—the movement being, indeed, the prelude to his prophecy uttered in this passage. The actual enumerations of Ephraim and Manasseh do not present so great a superiority as comes up to the expectation warranted by such a phrase as the “multitude of nations.” But they may not present us with the whole truth; and certain it is that Ephraim’s name was employed to designate collectively the ten tribes. . . . Jacob speaks consciously of the high and heavenly designation of his offspring. It is the great family interest, in fact, of which he is most full, and so makes the grand topic between himself and his son, narrating the converse of God with himself and his fathers, and pointing to the land whither his posterity were to be brought. . . . The Angel of the sixteenth verse seems identified with the God of the preceding verse—and the reference then, is it not, to the Angel of the Covenant? . . . Does not the last verse intimate that Jacob had been engaged in war and made conquests in Canaan—that he had obtained a dominion and property there, of which he here assigns a larger portion to Joseph than to any other of his brethren?

GENESIS XLIX. 1-12.—This was probably at a distinct time from that of the conversation he held with Joseph.

From the outset of this chapter he announces himself to be a Prophet; and he certainly breathes forth one of its loftiest strains.

Mark the distinction he makes between Reuben's birth and his personal character—the high ascriptions of excellence and glory he bestows on him because of the first, and then the denial of all that excellency and glory because of the second. Let no generosity or nobleness of sentiment be sustained as a compensation or counterpoise to the degradation we incur by a weak and worthless sensibility.

What eloquence of indignation against the two next of his family for their cruelties in Shechem! The prophecy he utters respecting these had an obvious fulfilment in Levi, and a real fulfilment, too, in Simeon, as may be seen by comparing Josh. xix. 1-9 with 1 Chron. iv. 39-42.

In the magnificent benediction of Judah are included both the strength of his tribe and the fertility of its place of occupation; but the surpassingly glorious distinction awarded to him was, that from him, according to the flesh, the Christ should come who was to draw all men unto Him. The Shiloh has had various significations given to it. "He was to be sent"—"the Apostle of our profession."

*March, 1842.*

13-21.—The border of Zebulun should be along the region of Sidon, not contiguous to the city. It touched both on the Mediterranean sea and the sea of Genesareth. How strongly prophetic is it to fix thus on a future locality.

If Zebulun was nautical, Issachar seems to have been more agricultural. (Deut. xxxiii. 18.) We would regard the next verse as referring to burdens in the literal sense, rather than understand these burdens as limits or

boundaries. Husbandmen are subject to public burdens not imposed on the mercantile or military classes.

Samson was of the tribe of Dan ; and he was one of the Judges. The book of Judges xviii. 27 has been quoted as an illustration of the seventeenth verse here. It is a plausible view of verse 18, that while the patriarch had his eye on the deliverance of the Israelites by Samson, he looked beyond to Christ the great Antitype.

Many interpretations are given of Gad's blessing. The prophecy served its design. We may not know the history which fulfilled it, but they who were immediately concerned might, and their faith be confirmed by it.

The blessing of Asher seems to have been fertility, of which Poole says, that, topographically, it was great.

The blessing of Naphtali is understood to denote liberty and the arts of peace. Some associate the Song of Deborah with the goodly words here spoken of. The facts are in all probability now lost which might have cleared up these prophecies. Yet the prophecies may have served their purpose, notwithstanding.

22-33.—Fertility and strength are awarded to Joseph—a strength which weathered the sore trial that was laid on him—a strength derived from God being with him. Thence, or from the hand of God, did he receive it, that he should be the nourishment and the defence of Israel. Thy father's blessings on his offspring surpass the blessings of my progenitors upon theirs. They reach onward to eternity, and shall rest on the head of Joseph.

Benjamin shall be a successful warrior. As in the earlier times of the Jewish history when Ehud was judge and Saul was king—or in later times, when Mordecai and Esther prevailed over their enemies.

The strong desire of nature to be laid in the grave of one's kindred breaks forth more than once in the history of the patriarch. Altogether, it is a solemn and affecting scene. His yielding up the ghost and being gathered unto his people—as if these two events were in close juxtaposition—and the latter previous to the funeral which took place many days after—would seem to indicate another sort of gathering with his ancestors than merely being buried with them, as if his spirit in returning to God joined Abraham and Isaac—standing before Him who is the God, not of the dead but of the living.

GENESIS L. 1-13.—Joseph throughout sustains the character of a most feeling and affectionate relative. What a coincidence between the embalming here spoken of, and the well-known Egyptian practice of preserving human bodies—still to be found and now termed Egyptian mummies! . . . The most likely explanation of Joseph getting at Pharaoh through the officials of his house instead of by a direct interview with himself, is that it was a violation of etiquette to appear before the king in mourning. (See Esther iv. 2.) . . . It is worthy of remark, the respect which Pharaoh had to an oath—as is every indication of the moral or religious feeling which obtained among different nations, and at different periods of the world . . . One can imagine the effect of all the pomp and procession of Jacob's burial on the minds of the natives. Could a similar movement be effected now among the Arabs of that tract of country with safety? and if not, does not this mark a higher degree of order and civilization at that early period?

14-26.—Another very fine exhibition of Joseph. One cannot say whether there was not something fictitious in



the address to him of his brethren. The alleged order of Jacob may have been devised as a less painful introduction of the topic of their great transgression. How kind and good in Joseph to refer the whole to the Providence of God. His comforting and speaking kindly unto them bespeak a truly amiable and right-hearted man.

Mark the curtailment of the period of human life, and how much short Joseph's age was of Jacob's—whose days were few and evil, and who had not attained unto the days of the pilgrimage of his fathers. It is interesting to observe how, notwithstanding his great prosperity in Egypt, and the interest he had there created for himself and his family, that all his partialities were with his fathers, and all his fond prospects were settled on the land of promise. His was still entirely a Hebrew mind; and in this spirit did he exact the promise from his brethren of having his bones carried to the family burial-place in Canaan. In virtue of the Egyptian art of preserving bodies, he may have been carried in a state of great entireness to his desired resting-place. It is perhaps against the supposition of this entireness, however, that both here and in other places, it is not the body but the bones of Joseph which are spoken of. It is interesting to trace the fulfilment of this dying commission in the subsequent Scriptures. See Exodus xiii. 19, and Joshua xxiv. 32. And the interest is not confined to itself—as use might be made of it in argument for the continuity of the history and canonicity of the books which contained it.

## EXODUS.

EXODUS I. 1-7.—The arrangement here presented of Jacob's sons proceeds on the principle of giving the precedence to the sons of his wives, and that in the order of their ages—then of their handmaidens, and that too in the order of their ages. Joseph is omitted, because it is a list of those who came with Jacob into Egypt; but he and his children are included among the seventy, for this is the number of the loins of Jacob.... It is not certain if Joseph died first of all the sons; but from the sixth verse, and from the twenty-fourth of the preceding chapter, it is pretty obvious that many of them must have survived him.... The early ages of the world, and more especially its sacred history, bear evidence to the power of the principle of population. The land of Goshen, where the children of Israel dwelt, was a fruitful territory; and they soon multiplied up to its capabilities. The original civilization, which declined afterwards, was favourable to this increase in primitive times; and to one now thoroughly enlightened in the doctrine of Malthus, there is nothing incredible in the vast and speedy augmentation of numbers which took place in countries not yet fully peopled, and where the extent of yet unappropriated soil was of itself a safety-valve for the outlet of those emulous passions, which in after times gave rise to such desolating wars.

8-22.—This ingratitude of the new king is quite of a piece with history and human nature. He felt, however, the value of having the children of Israel within his dominions, whether from the tribute they paid or the service they rendered. In what keeping the kind of work

imposed upon them is with the wondrous monuments of architecture which are still before our eyes. . . . The reply of the midwives to the king may have had nought of the deceitful it. It is not improbable that the Hebrew mothers, aware of the cruel order, evaded it by not sending for the midwives, and trusting to Providence for a safe delivery without them. . . . There has been a great diversity of opinion respecting the houses of verse twenty-first. The most obvious sense is also the most probable one: God made the midwives, or rather their husbands, to be founders of prosperous families in Israel—not as a reward for their deceit, but for their courage and benevolence. There may have been no deceit, as we have already explained. It may have been quite true that the mothers anticipated the midwives. At all events, the charge which Pharaoh gave at first to the midwives seems to have been extended by him and laid on all his people—so that, notwithstanding the evasion of the midwives, the barbarous edict was put into execution. The male children were liable to be seized upon at any time after their delivery, as we may perceive from the hiding of Moses for three months.

EXODUS II. 1-10.—This is one of the most picturesque of our Scripture narratives. What a horrid system must have obtained in Egypt, when every Hebrew male child, if detected by any of the people, behoved to be destroyed by them. How cruel to the Hebrews—how barbarizing to the Egyptians. No romance could have been more skilfully framed for the purpose of setting all the affections in play, than this simple and beautiful story—the placing of the babe by the river side—the watching of him by his

sister—the approach of Pharaoh's daughter to the spot—the crying of the child and its influence on the sensibilities of a woman's heart—the offer of the sister to call a nurse, and thus the restoration of the babe to its own mother again. In the epistle to the Hebrews this act of Moses' parents is said to have been by faith: and we cannot doubt that all was overruled by the providence of God, even to the very suggestion which prompted the measure they took with their child. Whether they had in any degree the light of a revelation for what they did, they must at least have felt a certain confidence in the protection of Him who is invisible, else they would not have been remarked by the Apostle among the Old Testament worthies who through faith obtained a good report.

11-25.—Moses, of course, must have known well his descent though the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter; and his predilections and feelings, notwithstanding the blandishments of a court, were all on the side of his own people—for whose sake and in whose cause he despised all the riches of Egypt, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. (Heb. xi. 25, &c.)

We are presented anew in the land of Midian with those groupes and scenes which charmed us so much in certain earlier passages of the patriarchal history. There is a trait in this narrative which indicates the barbarism of uncourteousness to females. Moses might have regard to himself as a stranger in either land, whether of Egypt or Midian.

It does not appear on the face of Scripture how many kings reigned over Egypt while the Israelites were there. The king whose death is recorded here must have been the same from whom Moses fled. But the Hebrews do

not seem to have made aught by the change. It was a long period of adversity which they were made to endure; but God's purposes are not to be regulated by the impatience of man; and the length of such visitation in the history of His dealings even with His own, might well lead us to expect that the troubles of the Church may last longer than our sanguine hopes would incline us to anticipate. Yet at God's own time the period of deliverance will at length arrive. The Covenant with the patriarchs and the sure mercies of David will never be forgotten by Him.

EXODUS III. 1-10.—This is one of the most illustrious of the recorded appearances of the Angel of the Covenant. In the second verse he who is called the Angel of the Lord (Jehovah) appeared in the bush, and this identical being, called Lord (Jehovah) and God in the fourth verse, says of Himself in the sixth verse, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham," &c., and Moses was afraid to look upon God. He is repeatedly in the course of this narrative styled Lord, (Jehovah.) The whole state and circumstances of the interview indicate the presence, not of a subordinate or created angel, but of the supreme God—the distance to be kept by Moses during the time of it—the order to take off his shoes—the holiness of the ground on which he was standing. This passage is quoted by our Saviour in argument for the immortality of the soul—inasmuch as God being God of the living, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must have been still alive. One cannot but feel, along with this contemplation, that Moses was no stranger to the hope of another life—when, having respect unto the recompence of reward, and in connexion



too with this appearance as being that of Christ, we can understand how Moses should have been said by Paul to have endured the reproach of Christ in taking the part he did for the children of Israel.

11-22.—The dialogue proceeds: and is sustained throughout by Moses on the one hand, and a Divine personage on the other—the Angel of the Covenant, who is Christ. Some refer the promised sign, in the twelfth verse, to what went before—either to the miracle of the bush unconsumed, or to the promise, I will be with thee, which, when verified as it was by prodigies and extraordinary powers, would assure Moses of the final success of his commission. But it seems more natural to refer it to what follows: and though the service of God in the mountain was posterior to the egress of the Israelites from Egypt, it still had much of the significancy and effect of a token; and other examples of signs, to take place after the promised fulfilment, occur in Scripture—as 2 Kings xix. 29; Is. vii. 13, 14. Much can be alleged in vindication of this . . . . O Lord, may I glorify Thy name—expressive of essential existence, and which, if fully understood, might guide the inquiring spirit into the very depths of the Godhead. I have at times dwelt on the supposition of an eternal nullity—and in contemplation of the alternative between entity and non-entity, have been tempted to put the question—How is it?—or what the springs and principles of that necessity are upon which the former of the two terms is the one that has been realized? Humble me, O God, under a sense of this inexplicable mystery; and prepare me for that state when in Thy light I should clearly see light . . . . But in the next verse He reveals another name, expressive of His relation



to His people, and of the benefits He had done to them. The first expresses what He is in Himself; the second what He is to the children of Israel—the name, therefore, which should be His memorial, or by which He should be made mention of in all generations.... The well-known explanation of Butler clears up the concluding verses.

EXODUS IV. 1-10.—The unbelief or want of confidence on the part of Moses, even in the face of a miracle and in the presence of God, is a phenomenon of our nature often exemplified in Scripture, and which we cannot confront by any experience of our own—having never had miracles wrought before us, nor had the opportunity therefore of observing the effect of them. Wanting this opportunity, our tendency is to overrate the effect they should have had upon us—and hence our wonder at the incredulity of the Jews in the days of our Saviour. But though miracles did not work a perfect confidence in the mind of Moses, they should have done it; and, accordingly, for the purpose of working in him more confidence, God works before him more miracles. The schooling of Moses in these verses, should also school us into the lesson of the legitimacy and power of miracles, as the evidence of a Divine commission. Nay, God expressly says that that is the effect which these miracles ought to have, and would have, on the mind of the Israelites—"that they may believe," &c.—whose unbelief might stand its ground against so many miracles, but would at length give way when more miracles were persevered in.... It is instructive to observe the effect of these miraculous interpositions on the spectators and bystanders before whom they were displayed. It presents us with an exhibition of our

nature placed in extraordinary circumstances ; and gives us to know of the human mind that which we have not the opportunity of verifying by any observation of our own.

11-17.—Moses' continued diffidence shows that miracles are not omnipotent ; and it is worthy of remark that God sets himself to overbear this by doctrinal considerations—speaking of His own power and His own promise. The anger of the Lord on this diffidence being further persisted in, is quite at one with the remonstrances of our Saviour against the unbelief of His Apostles ; and is of itself a proof that the will has to do with unbelief—a wrong volition being the only legitimate object of anger. Moses ought to have considered the demonstrations that had been given, and encouraged himself thereby—and thus by a mental effort have bid away his fears. And yet what respect is evinced by God to natural securities ; when, instead of repeating any further the assurance of miraculous gifts, He bids Moses look at Aaron, and take courage in the thought of that natural eloquence which he had. Let us not, after this, undervalue the importance of natural gifts for a clergyman.

18-31.—It is remarkable how often reticence is practised by the Old Testament worthies. Moses seems to have kept back from Jethro the true motive of his request for permission to go to Egypt.... God could by miracle have saved Moses from his enemies though alive ; yet the consideration on which he bids Moses go to Egypt is that all they were dead who had sought his life. Another example of the respect had, even under the Divine administration, to the ordinary laws of nature and experience.... The hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and yet the aggrava-

tion of his guilt in that it should have been hardened under the moral appliances brought to bear upon it, is to many a profound enigma, from the perplexities of which I feel myself to have been freed by the study of Predestination in connexion with Philosophical Necessity.... The counterpart of the first-born between the two parties is worthy of being noticed.

Amid the diversity of comments on the passage, from verse 24, the most natural account of the matter seems to be that Moses, in uxorious deference to Zipporah, had neglected the circumcision of Gershom—that God sent a destroying angel, and perhaps smote Moses with disease, which would have been fatal had it not been arrested by the performance of the omitted duty—that Zipporah probably had to perform it because Moses was laid up in sickness—and that her wrathful effusion was the consequence of her aversion to the infliction of such a severity on her child.

The Lord secured the fulfilment of his prophecy to Moses in verse 14 by a message to Aaron; and the fulfilment would be felt by Moses as an additional guarantee whereby to assure his heart. Aaron, be it observed, was the spokesman, and not only so, but did the signs in the sight of the people—whose consequent faith and obeisance tell with great force on our sympathies as we read thereof.

Exodus v. 1-11.—I cannot help being struck with the pretext made use of by Moses and Aaron for their request to Pharaoh; but they said what God had put into their mouths; and this, agreeably to the principle of Butler in his *Analogy*, legalizes the specific act, while it gives no sanction to the general habit of dissimulation.... There is

a graphic truth in the hard and hostile reception of their proposal by Pharaoh; and it should be remarked, that in questioning them about the Lord, he repeats the name which they themselves had given him—Jehovah. This name was recently promulgated to Moses; and we are not to wonder that it should have been new to Pharaoh. It seems to have sounded to him like a new and before unheard of Deity—for I should think there was a sufficient remainder still of the primitive theism even in Egypt to have ensured the king's recognition of the supreme God, had he not been designated by his new appellation of Jehovah.

It was quite a natural following out of the displeasure excited by this interview, that he should lay an aggravation on the burdens of the oppressed Israelites. This new king seems fully to have inherited the tyrannical disposition of the one that went before him; and indeed, it is after the death of his predecessor, and therefore at the beginning of his reign, that the children of Israel are said to have sighed by reason of their bondage, which made their cry come up unto God. (ch. ii. 23.) It is interesting to remark, in counterpart to this, that God heard their groaning (ch. ii. 24), and he afterwards tells Moses (ch. iii. 7) that He had seen their affliction and heard their cry. The first distinct exhibition, however, of this Pharaoh, is in the passage before us; and it is quite in keeping with all that is further recorded of him and of his dealings with the people of Israel.

12-23.—As a specimen of God's dealing with His people this passage is a highly instructive one. When any promise of deliverance comes we long for its fulfilment, and our hopes—often sanguine as our wishes—look for its being

instantly realized. But it is not so that God disciplines even His best loved children. He lengthens out their adversities by delays and disappointments, even after the expectations which either by His Word or by His Providence He Himself had inspired. It is thus that He is often pleased to exercise the spirits of His chosen; and they, led by this schooling to wait upon God, are nurtured in the faith and patience of the saints. We have just met with a prolongation of this sort in the reversal of a hope for the Church of Scotland—and that too from an unlooked for determination on the part of men in power. May we be led thereby to the grace of waiting and still looking upwards, while God lengthens out our probation, and regulates His administration by such periods and successions as to our puny optics look immeasurably long.

The freedom of Moses' remonstrance seems to evince that he had still to learn this lesson.

EXODUS VI. 1-8.—But God forgets not His own purposes, though He executes them in His own way, and maintains His own pace, which He hastens not and shortens not to meet our impatience. What is an age to us is but as a day to Him. The *now* which the Israelites counted on in the last chapter was not His *now*—which He announces at the beginning of this chapter, when the fitting time had arrived, and after He had subjected the people to the trial of one delay and disappointment more. Comporting with the magnitude of His objects are the intervals of succession which take place between the different steps or stages of His administration which connect the distant past with the distant future. He accordingly, in



speaking afresh to Moses, refers back to His appearances of some generations before to the ancestors of the chosen nation, and refers onward to their future settlement in the land of Canaan. He remembered His covenant of old with Abraham; and appealed to it in His present conversation with Moses, just as in the converse which He then held with the father of the faithful, He appealed to what his posterity were to suffer in Egypt and to their deliverance therefrom—the promise and the performance standing apart by centuries from each other. (See Gen. xv. 13, 14.) . . . The promise, “Ye shall know that I am the Lord your God,” bears in it a reference to the present ignorance and incredulity of the Hebrew mind, which should afterwards be opened and enlightened by the experimental vindication of His faithfulness that God was on the eve of making before their eyes, so as to overcome the distrust into which they had been thrown by the last disappointment that He had laid upon them for the trial of their faith.

9-13.—The ninth verse speaks volumes for the severity of that oppression under which the people groaned. My God, prepare us both to suffer and to do all Thy will.

Moses still persisted in his diffidence. It is true that he had met with a check in the refusal of his own brethren to hear him; and how then, he argues, can I expect Pharaoh to hear me? It is like keeping up the remonstrance which he held with God on the failure of his first interview with the king of Egypt, and on the painful disappointment of their hopes into which he, acting under the direction of God, had led the children of Israel. . . . The expression of “uncircumcised lips,” seems an extraordinary one. It was applied by the Jews contemptuously.



Its application to the organs of speech would seem to denote some excrescence there which impeded utterance and needed to be removed. It may thus signify an obstruction or difficulty of language . . . . The long-suffering of God appears in the patience wherewith He heard the continued and oft-repeated objections of Moses to the commands which He laid upon him. In this passage He is represented as first speaking to Moses; and then, upon his resistance, as speaking to Moses and Aaron conjunctly, which was a practical reply to Moses' objections, and ought to have encouraged him, and raised him from despondency—seeing that he had Aaron to go into Pharaoh along with him, who had the gift of free and ready eloquence, and could act as his mouth and his spokesman.

14-30.—The main object of the genealogy here is to set forth the heads of the tribe of Levi; and it is remarkable that those of Reuben and Simeon should also be given, when none of the other tribes were—whether in deference to the seniority of those two, or from whatever other cause, it is impossible to say . . . . Levi must have survived Joseph, the latter having died at the age of a hundred and ten, and the interval between the two births having been less than twenty-seven years. The period of Jacob's sojourn with Laban, during which both Levi and Joseph were born, was twenty years. The decrease of longevity did not take place very rapidly. Amram, the great grandson of Jacob, died fourteen years younger than he, and only four years younger than his grandfather Levi. These periods, taken in conjunction with the eighty years of Moses' life ere he appeared as the deliverer of his countrymen, make out a lengthened period of suffering and captivity in Egypt to the children of Israel.

There appears to be a resumption of the narrative that had been broken by the insertion of the genealogy.... What we are told in verses 28-30, looks the same as what we are told in verses 10-12, which is then followed in the succeeding chapter by an expansion of verse 13.

Exodus VII. 1-13.—Moses was adequately equipped and accredited for speaking to Pharaoh in the name of God. Those were called gods to whom the word of God came, (John x. 35,) and the word of God came to Moses. And Aaron stood in the same relation to Moses that a divinely commissioned messenger does to God—Moses revealed the truth to Aaron; and Aaron spake it.... God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and contemporaneously with this He multiplied signs and wonders before his eyes—the effect of which multiplication was to enhance the guilt of Pharaoh's resistance. All this we hold to be consistent both with the ethical and the mental philosophy—though there be a transcendental difficulty in the contemplation which stands related to God's part in it, as in every question that is any how connected with the origin whether of moral or physical evil. Mark here one great design of Heaven's policy, however little we may be able to explain or vindicate its principle. The effect, in the present instance, was that the Egyptians should *know* that God was the Lord. One great end of the Divine procedure is the manifestation of the Divine power and character—"That I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout the whole earth." Rom. ix. 17. See also Rom. ix. 22, 23.

Jannes and Jambres, mentioned in Timothy, were probably among these magicians. Whether their perform-

ances were mere feats of jugglery or real miracles by the help of demons and the permission of God, they only served to illustrate and strengthen the credentials of Moses. Scripture does not qualify the statement of God hardening Pharaoh's heart in the way that our theologians, even among the Calvinists do, by the distinctions which they frame between a permission and an appointment, or by any devices of explanation grounded on the limited receptivity of the creature, or the *vis inertiae* of created minds, or the privative character of evil.

14-25.—This was the season of the greatest and most stupendous miracles of any recorded in the history of the world—and that whether we look to the period of its duration, or to the magnitude of the scale on which the miracles were wrought. The public ministry and miracles of Moses lasted a great deal longer than those of Jesus Christ. And then, generally speaking, Moses' miracles were of wider and larger operation—reaching in the present instance to all the waters of Egypt, and bearing in the greater number of instances the same relation to the other miracles, whether of the Old or the New Testament, that nations do to individuals. There was the same character of magnificence in the subsequent plagues, which seem to have affected the whole land of Egypt, as the hail and the darkness, and the death of the first-born in all the families. Nor is this characteristic abated in the egress of the children of Israel when the whole host of their pursuers were drowned in the Red Sea; nor in their progress through the wilderness, where food for forty years was rained down from heaven; nor in their entrance on Canaan, when the waters of Jordan were separated to make way for their being ushered into the land of

promise, and the walls of Jericho fell before the sound of their trumpets. Altogether, this was emphatically the most miraculous period in the known history of the world.

EXODUS VIII. 1-7.—There seems more of creative power in the miraculous production of organic creatures than any other kind of miracle—than in the conversion of water into blood, for example, or the bringing on of universal darkness, or in the cleaving of a river or sea, or even in a work of general death and destruction as of the first-born in Egypt. The manifold collocations of an animal structure, impress me with a greater sense of supernatural power in such visitations as the frogs and flies and locusts in Egypt, and quails in the wilderness, than in all the other, though more dread and stupendous prodigies, which were exhibited in that season of extraordinary manifestations. To my imagination they stand the foremost among these wonderful works of old. Yet, for some purpose of Divine wisdom, were the magicians empowered or permitted to do the like—to give forth such a semblance or such an imitation of what Aaron had done before them, as might somewhat deafen the impression of his great miracle. Yet Pharaoh appears, notwithstanding the feats of his own magicians, to have been more subdued by the infliction of this third plague than by either of the former ones.

8-14.—Moses made full vindication of his superiority to the magicians in the first miracle. He may perhaps have done so in the second, if, though it be not recorded, it was at his supplication that the blood was reconverted into water. But he gave indubitable proof of this supe-

riority in the third ; and Pharaoh himself did homage to it, when, aware of his intercessory power with God, he craved his prayers for the removal of the frogs from the land of Egypt. Moses' reply—"Glory over me," has been variously expounded. It seems to me an expression of respectful compliance with the request. Be it as thou wilt—command my services ; and appoint your own time for my entreaty. The last proposal was all the more necessary, that Pharaoh might be led distinctly to connect the disappearance of the frogs with the prayer of Moses, and the prevalence of that prayer with God. Otherwise he might have ascribed their departure to natural causes.

15-32.—In the hour of distress he was humble ; in the hour of relief he forgot. (Eccl. vii. 14.) He then hardened his heart as the Lord had said. But the Lord said that it was He Himself who should harden the heart of Pharaoh. But he did it through the operation of a second cause, of a proximate influence, which in this case was the feeling of respite from the visitation that had now passed away. In the next plague, however, though the magicians were more fully and visibly outdone than ever before, inasmuch as they acknowledged God's hand in the new miracle, even then was Pharaoh's heart hardened. Does not this look like a progressive hardening, the effect of previous acts of resistance ? and does it not prove that, though it was God who hardened, He did it not merely by the operation of second causes, but also of general laws ?

The next plague was sent to the end that Pharaoh might know God. Had he learned aright, this would have been the direct, and let me add, the desired end. Pharaoh would have repented, and he should have experimentally known of Him as a God of mercy. But what might have



been a savour of life was a savour of death to him ; yet was he made to know God ere all was done, to know Him in the power of His indignation. The peculiarity of this sign is, at least of this one it is first recorded, that the land of Goshen should be exempted—a severance this which could only be accomplished by a supernatural constraint over the flies, which made the plague all the more strikingly miraculous.

Pharaoh's proposed stipulation, that they should not go far away, proves the value he had for the services of the children of Israel. The hardening process went on in the heart of Pharaoh. Let us not imagine that because of the miraculous character of these proceedings we may not draw from this example a general lesson of the progressive impenitency of him who multiplies his acts of disobedience and deceit.

EXODUS IX. 1-12.—There were two palpable indications of miracle in this plague—first, in the appointment of a set time for its taking effect—second, in the exemption as before of the children of Israel. And it also evinces a progressive hardening of the heart of Pharaoh that he should stand his ground not only against so clear a manifestation of the Divinity, but a manifestation brought home to him as the result of his own inquiry—for he sent to ascertain how it fared with the cattle of the Israelites.

In the next miracle there was an instrumentality employed—the casting of the ashes upward in the air, which became small dust, that seems to have lighted on the people, and festered into boils upon their persons. The action of Moses, it is true, performed as it was before Pharaoh, might have been meant to impress him with the agency of



God through His messenger in this plague. Yet we are not to deny that there might be a method and the use of means in the working of miracles—as in the mixing up of clay with spittle by the Saviour, and application of the ointment to the eyes of the blind. Even the miracle of the loaves seems founded on the original loaves produced by the Apostles; and so, for aught we know, might there have been a causal efficiency between the ashes and the boils.—The infliction of this plague even upon the magicians, and the still unyielding obstinacy of Pharaoh notwithstanding, marks a still more resolute degree of hardihood than ever. He was fast ripening for an overthrow. Often reproved, he as often hardened his heart, and was destroyed suddenly. (Prov. xxix. 1.)

13-26.—This is the most solemn and full adjuration made to Pharaoh that has yet been recorded; and the effect of which, therefore, as it was eventually resisted, would have the effect of aggravating his condemnation. The final object of thus dealing with Pharaoh was the manifestation of God, as affirmed here in verse 16, and quoted in Rom. ix. 17. The objective warning and the subjective resistance to it are both represented as being from God—shrouding Him it may be in mystery—but by all Scripture, and we will add in all right philosophy, leaving Pharaoh the more guilty and inexcusable.... The direction to send for the cattle and shield them from the coming hail, proves that all the cattle had not died. But in verse sixth it is said that all the cattle had died; which must either mean, therefore, only very many, or it may be all the cattle which had been abroad, and not those in the house. The direction to shelter their cattle served to discriminate those among the Egyptians who put faith in these Divine

warnings, and those who disregarded them. The miracle was enhanced, as in some former instances, by the exemption of the children of Israel from this sore visitation.

27-35.—As the pre-announcement of this sign was more solemn than usual, so the effect, for a time at least, seems to have been unusually great—drawing out larger submissions and acknowledgments and promises from Pharaoh than he had before uttered. Moses in his reply helps forward the great object of manifestation, by pointing out the cessation of the plague as the sequence of his prayer, so that Pharaoh might know there was a God who had power upon the earth. He at the same time predicted the continued hardihood of Pharaoh, which of itself was an evidence of superior knowledge that should have helped all the more to convince and **soften** the king of Egypt.

I should like to know the **present** crops of Egypt; and if there still grow there flax and barley and wheat and rye; and if the barley be in the ear, and the flax balled ere the wheat and rye are grown up. There is a world of evidence in minute coincidences between things past and present.... The ostensible prayer of Moses gave all the more miraculous character to the cessation of the thunder and hail, and so laid all the greater condemnation on the obstinacy and falsehood of Pharaoh. Truly he sinned yet more, not by addition only to the quantity but by aggravation of the quality of his sin—his conscience getting more and more seared by every new act of disobedience to its call.

Exodus x. 1-15.—It is truly marvellous that God should harden the heart of Pharaoh, to be in a counterpart state of resistance for the signs which he was yet to exhibit before him—suiting in this way the **subjective** to the **objec**

tive, and so as to aggravate still more the guilt of Pharaoh. It is a mystery that will be cleared up at the last. A still ulterior object, however, to this was a manifestation to the children and people of Israel. These things were done for the purpose of being told to their families from generation to generation, that they might know God to be the Lord. Accordingly, this plague seems not only to have been the most formidable of all that had gone before it, but to have been prefaced by a more importunate charge and warning—and followed up by a more appalling threat of the consequences that would follow a refusal.

So alarmed were Pharaoh's servants that they interposed with a remonstrance against his obstinacy. How long shall we damage ourselves by impinging against this man—this *σκανδαλον*—this stumbling-block? How long shall we kick against the pricks? Do you not see that the country is going visibly to destruction?—Pharaoh gave way, but soon recovered his hardihood. He wanted to detain the children as hostages to secure their return—proving the value that he had for their services.... The reply of Pharaoh is expressive of his hostile determination. Let the Lord be inclined towards you as I am—conveying thus an imprecation against them, accompanying it with a threat of evil should they attempt it.

I should not in ch. vii. 1-7 have reasoned on the animals being produced miraculously. They may have only been miraculously brought together. The frogs may have come from the river. (ch. viii. 9.) The flies were sent. (ch. viii. 21.) And here the locusts were brought by an east wind; and this plague seems to have been the most grievous of any yet.

*April, 1842.*

16-29.—Pharaoh seems to have been more humbled for

the time by this plague than by any of the preceding ones. He called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and prayed their forgiveness, with the assurance that he would only ask it for this once, or that he would never again deceive them. ... I confess the interest I feel in the recognition here of the geographical bearing of Egypt on the Red Sea. There is something in the identity of nature's features, in ancient and modern times, which brightens our conceptions and even strengthens our convictions of the records of far distant days.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart after this hitherto most appalling of all the miracles, marks the growing inveteracy of the moral disease in his spirit. But the next sign was still more dreadful. One can figure how the darkness of those days would operate terrifically on the imaginations and consciences of the people—a darkness sensible to the touch from the dense humours, perhaps, that helped to aggravate it. The wonder was mightily enhanced by the light in Goshen.

It seems to have told more powerfully on the fears or conscience of Pharaoh than any of the former ones. He made larger concessions than he had ever done before. But the remaining demand of Moses stirred up the old spirit that Pharaoh had done so much to foster; and which now made greater demonstration of its strength—because in the face of greater and increasing judgments each rising above the other. His angry dismissal of Moses is quite in nature; and so is Moses' valedictory utterance, though spoken, we have no doubt, under the guidance of prophetic inspiration.

EXODUS XI.—To harmonize this chapter with the one

preceding, we must suppose that the three first verses recount a passage of what had taken place before the last interview between Moses and Pharaoh, which was broken up by saying, on the part of the prophet, that they should see each other no more. . . . This borrowing is well vindicated by Butler in his *Analogy*. The favour of the Egyptians for the Israelites, and the glory wherewith they invested Moses, are perfectly natural, and go to support the theory that the tyrant kings of Egypt were exotic and invading kings, who held the whole country by right of conquest—in a word, the Shepherd Kings, the first of whom was he of whom it is said that he knew not Joseph.

In what follows, Moses resumes the narrative of his last conversation with Pharaoh, now stating what he had postponed in the last chapter—his announcement of the last and most tremendous plague against which Pharaoh, whose hardness had now reached its climax, still stood his ground. The manifestation of its being from God is heightened, as in some of the former instances, by the difference which Moses put between the Egyptians and the Israelites. . . . Moses was by this time pretty sure that he had the servants of Pharaoh on his side. (ch. x. 7.) It marks the iron despotism of the monarch, that his single will should prevail over the general and earnest wishes both of the court and of the country. . . . The three first verses may be regarded as parenthetical; and what follows may be read as a continuance of the colloquy at the end of the last chapter. Are not "the people that follow thee," in verse eighth, distinct from the aboriginal Egyptians? and are not the Egyptians, in the beginning of the third verse in like manner distinct from the people at the end of it?

EXODUS XII. 1-10.—We are now drawing towards the doctrine and spirit of the new dispensation. The Old Testament begins now to be impregnated with the Gospel; and we feel the progress of a divine scheme as we read for the first time of that sacred rite which stands forth as an illustrious type of the Saviour and the Sacrifice. The lamb was got ready four days before it was killed—a lamb without blemish, to prefigure Him who was a lamb without blemish and without spot. The blood struck on the posts represents the blood of Christ sprinkled on our souls; and to prove how we have now got among the objects of Apostolic contemplation, we have the unleavened bread, wherewith the flesh was eaten, referred to by the Apostle when he bids us keep the Christian passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. My God, while eating the flesh of Christ, the passover sacrificed for us by acting faith on His broken body, let it be that faith unfeigned which is ever accompanied with love unfeigned. And let this flesh be eaten not with unleavened bread only, but with bitter herbs—with truth in the inward parts and repentance in the heart and life.

11-20.—God passed over the houses sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice—so that the Destroying Angel went by without inflicting the death which he did in the houses of the Egyptians. Give me, O Lord, to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, that Thou mayest pass over my transgressions, and the minister of vengeance may not touch me.... The judgments executed on the gods of Egypt are variously understood. They may have been such as we read of elsewhere on the Dagon of the Philistines. By this time idolatry must have been prevalent in Egypt. ... God says that when He sees the blood upon their houses,



He will keep back the plague from them. See me, O God, in the face of Thine Anointed; and let me wash out my sins in His blood, that they may be no longer reckoned against me.... Let the curse pronounced here on the use of leavened bread, convince me of the sore judgment which awaits those who name the name of Christ, yet purge not out the old leaven from their character, by departing from all iniquity. If all old things be not done away, we shall be cut off from the congregation of the faithful.

21-27.—The bunch of hyssop has been viewed as representing the faith which appropriates and applies the blood of Christ to the soul. Lord, enable me thus to take hold of Thy Son as my propitiation, that in like manner as when Thou sawest the blood on the lintel and side-posts of the door, Thou sufferedst not the destroyer to enter—so, having faith to be healed, may I be seen of Thee in the face of Thine own Anointed, and may the blood of Christ be so sprinkled over me that the avenger might pass me by. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow.

The institution of the passover, to be observed as an ordinance by the Israelites from father to son for ever, has been well reasoned on as a sure tradition, and which authenticates the miraculous history in which it originates. The practice of so transmitting it from parents to children, and with such an account as they were required at each generation to hand downward to those who came after them, can be satisfactorily traced to no other commencement than the reality of the great event which it professed to commemorate.... The alternations of faith and unbelief, of submissive and reverential piety at one time

and ungrateful discontent at another, begin already to appear in the minds of the people. They are for the present under a solemn feeling and sense of God, even as at the first announcement of the Lord's gracious purposes towards them. (ch. iv. 31.) They soon afterwards, however, remonstrated with Moses in a way that proved how soon their faith and patience could be overcome. The stupendous miracles of the ten plagues, seem to have restored their confidence again, to give way, however, on the occurrence of future trials. Meanwhile, the simultaneous and general act of homage on the part of a whole people is very impressive in the description, as it must have been in the exhibition of it.

28-39.—The reverential feeling was followed up by the respectful and ready obedience. This climax of God's dreadful judgments on the land had the effect at last. The great cry all over the land reached at length the heart of Pharaoh, himself a sharer in the universal suffering. He made no terms or qualifications now, but bade Moses and Aaron go as they had said, or go upon their own terms. And this dread infliction on all the families of Egypt told with as great effect on the people as on the monarch, and made them urgent on the Israelites to go upon any terms. Pharaoh was so far humbled as to seek Moses' prayers; and the Egyptians lavished their gifts on the children of Israel. The word translated *borrowed*, might have been translated, *asked*, or *demanded*. But I can devise no vindication of the borrowing transaction so satisfactory as that of Bishop Butler. We are not to imagine that the Israelites were driven out of Egypt with hostile violence; but by the urgent entreaties of a people now terror-stricken, or under a feeling the

same in kind though a hundred-fold more intense in degree than that wherewith the Gadarenes, after the destruction of the herd of swine, besought Jesus to depart out of their coasts.

40-51.—There are chronological difficulties in the number of 430 years, which have not yet been completely adjusted. To make out a feasible explanation, we must date their commencement from a higher point than the entry into Egypt—say from the promise made to Abraham. It is not said here that this was the period of their sojourn in Egypt, but generally of their sojourning, which they did in other countries beside Egypt—(See Gen. xv. 13; Gal. iii. 17.) . . . It is a truly memorable night on which stress is laid in verse 42. The necessity of circumcision to the keeping of the passover prefigures the necessity of a circumcision of the heart under the new economy, to the right keeping of the great Christian passover. Give me this evidence, O Lord, of being Christ's—even that I have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, that the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world . . . We see an expansion of Judaism, beyond the children of Israel, in the admission of strangers, subjecting themselves, however, to the same law.

EXODUS XIII. 1-7.—There might important lessons be drawn from the largeness of the proportion which God here demands both of the people and the animals, for His own special use and service—or for being set apart in some way or other to Himself. The first-born bear a ratio to the whole, approaching to the tithe which he also claimed of the fruits of the earth, or even to the seventh which He specified as His own share of our time—not a

large proportion, certainly, when measured by His own absolute right—for He is Lord of all, both of ourselves and of all that belongs to us—but large when measured by the natural inclination of man to consecrate what He has unto God. Look at the encroachments ever making on the Sabbath, so as to abridge the really consecrated time; or at the miserable allowance which either the voluntary or even the national system would make for the support of religion, so as to abridge the consecrated wealth; or at the wholly inadequate number set apart and maintained for ecclesiastical services, so as very greatly to abridge the consecrated persons.... Let me mark as of special interest whatever there is in the Old Testament that bears reference to aught that is more explicitly unfolded in the New. The strict discharge here issued afresh, and with so much emphasis, against the use of leaven at the feast of the passover, I ought to feel in all its moral significance as an injunction on myself, and on all who put faith in the blood of Christ, to purge out the old leaven, and renouncing all malice and all wickedness, to make use of no other than the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Thus I should have the two-fold blessedness of him to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Ps. xxxii. 2.)

8-22.—No wonder that this great event of their deliverance from Egypt was the one selected for a special and perpetual commemoration. There could not have been a better security devised for a safe and firm pathway of tradition than that which was established from the outset in the directions given by God to Moses, and whereby it is laid on all parents as a religious duty that they should tell their children the origin and meaning of

this ordinance. It has been admirably shown that we of the present day can trace backward, by means of this annual festival, a series of testimonies, to be accounted for in no other possible way than by the truth of the narrative presented to us in Scripture—so as to make the passover a monumental evidence for the authenticity of one of the most stupendous miracles ever recorded.... It is worthy of remark, that the method is specified for the redemption of the more valuable animals—that is, by the sacrifice of those less valuable. The method for the redemption of children is not so specified. It was not by victims but by the institution of a priesthood, by the setting apart of the tribe of Levi in place of the first-born of all Israel, which had not yet taken place, so that the explanation was not yet given, because deferred till then. The redemption of the children is only as yet mentioned generally—but how it was to be effected we are not made to understand till afterwards.

We may see here a limitation on the exercise of God's miraculous power. He could have overruled their fears of war; but He chooses rather to provide against these in a natural way. The people went out of Egypt in military order, if not in military equipment.... It is very interesting to connect together the distant periods of history, as the charge given by Joseph for his burial, and the fulfilment of it by Moses many years afterwards.

The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire stand illustriously forth among the signs and prodigies and supernatural notices of Heaven to Earth in this miraculous period.

EXODUS XIV. 1-14.—Here we again behold the Lord hardening the heart of Pharaoh, for the object of manifes-

tation or of setting forth His own character—that He might be honoured upon him and his host, and that the Egyptians might know Him to be the Lord. We see explicitly what it was all along that made Pharaoh so unwilling to part with the Israelites—the profit he made of their service. The Israelites went out with a high hand, with a proud consciousness of might and safety, which was speedily put to flight, however; for no sooner did they see the Egyptians in pursuit after them than they were sore afraid. They first cried unto the Lord, but soon found how little of faith there was in their prayer, when they remonstrated with Moses and murmured against him. This is the first glaring specimen of that perversity wherewith Moses had afterwards to strive for forty years. One is apt to conceive that it must have been due in part to the brutalizing influence of slavery on their minds—that, insensible to all the demonstrations they had gotten of the Divine power and friendship, they should be so much the creatures of things present and sensible, and forget all, and betake themselves to their despairing complaints and apprehensions on the first moment of any seeming reverse in their affairs. It would look as if oppression had bereft them of all manhood—for the part they acted all along was more like that of criminals or children. It was this, perhaps, which made it expedient that the whole of that generation should die out ere they entered Canaan.—My God, when brought into difficulties which look inextricable, let us be still and know that Thou art God. Let us cast our care and confidence upon Thee; and, waiting in patient reliance on Thy very present help, may we never forget that the Church's extremity is Thy opportunity.



15-21.—A most striking attestation here, and from God himself too, to the danger of superseding or setting aside performance by prayer, and to the necessity of doing as well as praying.... The hardening of the hearts of the Egyptians is brought out here in bold and distinct form, as connected with the Lord's obtaining thereby honour for Himself, and of spreading abroad amongst the people the knowledge of His power and Godhead.

These were solemn and striking movements in the sky above their heads, when the pillar of cloud went from the front to the rear of the multitude—a pillar of darkness to the Egyptians in the night, but of fire to the Israelites.... The cleaving of the Red Sea was a consequent on the outstretching of his hand by Moses; and yet there was the intervention of a strong east wind. The thing was not done immediately on the lifting up of Moses' arm, but mediately by the impulse of the wind upon the waters—a strong illustration of our doctrine, that God worketh all in all; and that this truth should not be lost sight of or obscured—because, working by means, there is a train of secondary causes between the fiat of the Almighty and the final result of the process.

22-31.—O that this impressive description of the Lord looking in wrath from the sky above on the Egyptians would impress me adequately with those terrors which belong to Him as a God of judgment; and that henceforth I should stand in awe and sin not when I think of the tribulation and anguish which will at length come upon the impenitent when the wrath of God is turned toward them. May the rebuke of thy countenance be present to my thoughts in every hour of temptation.... The Lord took off their chariot wheels. One knows not if this was literally

done; and as if to save such an understanding the verb is translated variously in different versions. I am unwilling to weaken the effect of this most sublime though simple narrative by any attempt to expound it. It is a record of the most stupendous of miracles, and most stupendous of judgments. It told most powerfully on the minds of the Israelites; but it is indeed a marvellous exhibition of our nature that it should have told but for a time, and that a brief time. Meanwhile, however, and as the immediate effect of this awful manifestation when still fresh upon their senses, or just after they *saw* the great work done upon the Egyptians, did the people fear the Lord and believe in Him and His servant Moses. How soon the impression was dissipated we shall see.

Exodus xv. 1-19.—This noble poem is ascribed to Moses himself; and while its poetry speaks the inspiration of high genius, its sacredness speaks the direct inspiration of Heaven. Such a recognition of poetry and song tells us that in the service of God there should be the exercise, the consecrated exercise, of all the powers which He has given to us; and tells us that in religion the enjoyment might be as various as are the capacities of our nature. And there is that of sentiment in it which adapts it to the use of a Church delivered from her enemies in all ages—nay, which fits and so makes it to be actually adopted for one of the triumphant songs of eternity. I will not attempt what I could not execute but inadequately and feebly—a commentary on this great composition. My God, deliver me from the power of my spiritual enemies, so as that I may triumph gloriously and make Thee my strength and my song, because of so great an emancipation. I am at a loss

to particularize the verses which tell most powerfully upon me. Next to the direct ascriptions of praise sent up to Him who sitteth in the heavens, and gave forth these signal demonstrations of Himself on the earth below, is the sublimity of the narrative, of which I would single out verses 5th, 9th, and 10th. There is something also very impressive in the declared consciousness of their own peculiar relationship to God as His selected family; and of the ulterior blessings which He had in reserve for them—to realize and reach onward to which was the great design of their present movement—as in verses 13th, 16th and 17th. I have often felt, as in reading Milton or Thomson, a strong poetical effect in the bare enumeration of different countries, and this strongly enhanced by the statement of some common and pervading emotion which passed from one to another of their respective people. This is set forth with great beauty and power in verses 14th and 15th.

20-27.—Their very having of timbrels, or the materials of which they were made, is a specimen of how much and variously the children of Israel were enriched by the spoil of Egypt. I always feel a recoil when I read of women sharing in any exultation over an event which involves in it death, nor can I escape from this feeling when Miriam and her female attendants are set before me dancing over the destruction of the Egyptians whose dead bodies had been cast upon the sea-shore. Their song was the first stanza of the song of Moses, which may have been repeated by them at intervals as a chorus.

It seems marvellous to us that they should have lapsed into distrust and murmuring so very soon after this great manifestation. The physical agency of thirst may have overborne their powers of reflection. But we are no

judges of these exhibitions of human nature made in circumstances which have never been realized by us.... It is not said that Moses remonstrated against this their ungrateful discontent; but it is obvious that on this occasion some lesson was administered.... What the proving was seems simply to have been the establishment of certain rules or laws which might serve as tests of obedience. (Deut. viii. 2-15.) The directing that a tree should be cast in, which the Lord showed to Moses, and which was probably of a certain kind of wood, ere the miracle could succeed, teaches a respect for instrumentality or for the laws of nature and experience. Among the plagues of Egypt not only were the persons but the elements smitten with disease, as when the waters were turned into blood. He had just healed a disease of the latter kind by turning bitter water into sweet.... There seems at present to have been the passing of a covenant, in which God requires their obedience to certain statutes and pledges to exempt them from the suffering of disease and destitution in the region on which they were entering.... On Elim, see the Pictorial Bible.

EXODUS XVI. 1-8.—What a marvellous exhibition here of the strength of that apathy and resistance which there are in earth to all the demonstrations, however vivid and awful and recent, which are put forth from heaven. In six weeks only from their departure out of Egypt do the Israelites fall a murmuring—and that in the face of the engagement which had just been made after crossing the Red Sea, as recorded at the end of the last chapter. The agonies of hunger, and the mental prostration which slavery had laid upon them, may in part account for these

astonishing perversities; but we fear that much is due to an earthliness of nature universal with the species; but how much we are not proper judges of in the defect of all personal experience. The degradation and ingratitude, which their expressed wish for a return to Egypt indicates, appear altogether monstrous.... There seems to have been a current proving of them during their abode in the wilderness—a number of tests by which to try their obedience—and here it is the law for the gathering and using of the manna. How marvellous, we could almost say incredible, that they should yet require to know that the Lord had brought them out of the land of Egypt. (*v.* 6.) ... It was quite a natural remonstrance on the part of Moses when he complained of their making him and Aaron the objects of their murmuring.

9-21.—It enhances our wonder, that the glory of the Lord should be seen by the children of Israel at or about the time of their murmurings, and that such repeated manifestations should have thus been thrown away upon them—as if the constancy of miracles made them cease to be miraculous, or at least cease to have the effect of miracles. Another and stupendous miracle of forty years' standing was now to commence; and this to make them know—what by this time they might have well known—that He, under whose guidance they were, was the Lord their God. The manna was gathered so as to be proportional to the number of persons and their amount of eating, so that there should be enough and no residue. Here was another test for the children of Israel to prove what was in their hearts. They were enjoined to leave none until the morning; and here too another display of heedlessness or perversity on the part of this strangely



wayward generation. No wonder that Moses was wroth with them. They gathered their manna in the cool of the morning, as it had the property of being melted by the heat of the sun.

22-36.—Another standing miracle is the putrefaction of that which was kept till the morning of any other day than Sabbath—whereas through the whole of that day the manna gathered the day before was in a state of perfect freshness and preservation. Yet neither by this was the perversity of the children of Israel turned away. Is it that a standing miracle, when familiarized to view, has no more effect in suggesting or enforcing the idea of a God than would a law of nature?

And so we have again a new instance of disobedience, in that some of the people, on the back of an express prohibition, went out to gather upon the Sabbath. True it was only *some*. Yet the provocation of it was enough to call forth a remonstrance from God, which seems for a time at least to have taken effect.... The pot of manna formed part of the standing furniture of the Holy of Holies, and is included as such in the enumeration of Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews—"the golden pot that had manna." Was the identical manna preserved in it for ages miraculously preserved, or was it renewed from time to time? Even in this last way it would serve as a monumental evidence for the truth of the Mosaic history. And was this manna—kept in a place where the High Priest entered once a-year—brought out for exhibition, so that it might be seen by the people?... The Testimony is an abridged term for the Ark of the Testimony.

EXODUS XVII.—Another sad exhibition of this perverse



and stiff-necked generation. When Moses again redargued with them and asked—"Why tempt ye the Lord?" I should suppose him to mean—Why do ye again make trial of His patience and long-suffering? why do you hazard His displeasure by this fearful experiment on the forbearance of a God whom you thus affront by repining at His disposal in calling you out of Egypt? It was a great aggravation of their misconduct towards God—that because they had formerly experienced His goodness on the back of their complaints, they would presume on the efficacy of these complaints and hard sayings over again. The agony of a strong physical discomfort, however, must not be overlooked, and which so goaded them on that they were ready to stone Moses. . . . The familiarity of Moses' pleadings with God, almost in the tone of one who had received injury at His hand, is worthy of observation. This repeated indulgence on the part of God, and the as oft-repeated ingratitude on the part of the Israelites, give a significancy to that verse in one of our historical Psalms—"He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." (Ps. cvi. 15.)

The miracle in the latter half of this chapter was fitted to magnify Moses in the eyes of the Israelites. It is interesting to observe here the first notice, as far as I recollect, of writing as an instrument for perpetuating the remembrance of sacred things—and for handing down the knowledge of God's Word and will to future generations. There was a particular rehearsal ordered for the ears of Joshua, who had the executive charge of exterminating in war those nations which God in judgment would utterly destroy.

EXODUS XVIII. 1-12.—There is no mention made of Moses sending back Zipporah to her father in the direct history

of the fourth chapter ; but such retrospective notices are often very valuable and confirmatory—when the incidental and posterior statement harmonizes with all that had been said previously. This visit of Jethro, and interview between him and Moses, form a sunny passage in a history often darkened by the perversities of a rugged and rebellious generation—having in it the mild and pleasing lustre of a home scene. One likes Jethro, whose heart seems to have been in its right place, and who appears to have been as much distinguished by sound judgment as by kind and domestic and fatherly affections. The mutual greetings and conversation of their first interview are true to nature ; nor can I well imagine a more profound interest than must have been felt by this patriarch of the wilderness in the narrations of his son-in-law. The theism which he deduces from these high supernatural transactions is in keeping with the priestly character of Jethro, who now confesses Jehovah to be greater than all gods. We know not in how far his previous creed had been tinged with polytheism ; but we can perceive here the wholesome collateral influence which the miraculous history of the Israelites must have had in keeping alive a purer notion of the Divinity even amongst those who were not Israelites. We cannot speculate on the theology of Jethro, who sustained the ecclesiastical character of a priest in his own land, but should imagine that it was in this character that he offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices in the present instance to the true God ; and which were so far recognised by Moses and Aaron and the Elders, that probably on this identical occasion they ate bread with him, it is added, before God.

13-27.—This was a truly wise and seasonable advice on

the part of Jethro. The men who fill the chief offices in the Church should do a great deal of their work by deputation. The division of employment is a principle vastly too little regarded or proceeded on in our day; and in things ecclesiastical the movement seems to be in the opposite direction. It would appear as if Moses had the sanction of God as well as the suggestion of Jethro in favour of the arrangement here proposed—for Jethro refers his son-in-law to the Divine counsel when he says in the twenty-third verse—"If thou shalt do this thing, and *God command thee so*," &c. It is well too to observe the special department left for Moses in this partition of labour between him and his auxiliaries—"Be thou for the people to God-ward"—and "thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws"—thus making his office analogous to that of the Apostles, who in devolving a work upon deacons, said that they would give themselves wholly to prayer and the ministry of the Word. And besides this, Moses was referred to in all the more delicate causes, which corresponds to the duty of ministers in Church courts. It mightily conduces to the right government of a parish, when, broken down into districts and sub-districts, these are made over to rulers of hundreds and rulers of fifties, appointed over them in various capacities, whether as Elders or Deacons, or Deaconesses or Sabbath teachers.—O that a commensurate agency could be raised for the perishing thousands of Scotland, so that both towns and parishes might be fully overtaken!

It is to be presumed that Jethro would now part with Zipporah and her children—leaving them with Moses. At present I do not recollect any subsequent notice of them in the sacred history.

EXODUS XIX. 1-13.—We now come to the manifestations of the Godhead on Mount Sinai—the most direct and visible and public that have ever been recorded in the annals of that high intercourse which has taken place between Heaven and earth. First, Moses went up unto God; when the Lord (Jehovah) called him out of the mountain; and by a beautiful and touching image set forth His care of the children of Israel, whom he had borne from Egypt to the heart of the secluded wilderness, as on eagles' wings. He here tells what they should be to Him, and what their lofty privileges and designations if they kept His covenant. But they did not keep it; and these very designations are transferred by Peter to another people, (1 Pet. ii. 9)—seeing that the Jews disallowed that stone which was made the head of the corner.

Then follows the announcement of that great and solemn interview, when, from the flaming top of Sinai, the tokens of a present Divinity were held forth in the sight of all Israel. Moses acted the part of a messenger or mediator between God and the people—conveying to them the words which he had heard, and carrying back their promises and engagements of obedience. This coming of the Lord in a thick cloud was expressly for the purpose of their hearing the voice which issued therefrom, and so believing in Him for ever—the honest purpose of God, though afterwards frustrated by the perversity of man; and thus another exemplification of that mystery which will never be dissipated in this world—a declared and ostensible purpose of the Almighty coming short of its fulfilment. Let not our inability to scan the hidden counsel turn us away from the palpable lesson here given of the Divine sacredness—in that the people had to sanctify

themselves for this great and solemn occasion, and dare not overpass the prescribed barrier, or come too near to that awful majesty of God, which, within certain limits, was unapproachable.

14-25.—There is here recorded the most signal and extraordinary manifestation from Heaven to earth of any that sacred history makes known to us, and of which we read nothing that comes so near to the great and final appearance from the sky on the last day of the world—nothing so great and palpable, and addressed at the same time to such a number of hearers and spectators. We are not sure if what was addressed to the ear did not give more sensible token of a present deity than what was addressed to the eye—the voice of the trumpet, more than the clouds, or thunders, or lightnings, as if sounded forth by a living agent. The trembling of the people was the unavoidable result of such an approximation to earth from the upper regions of the invisible—when God descended, and the mount smoked and quaked greatly. It was on the trumpet becoming louder and louder that Moses spake; and we may infer from the epistle to the Hebrews, (Heb. xii. 21,) what he said—not the cool and collected utterance of an incipient conversation, but the expression of an overwhelming terror—"I exceedingly fear and quake." It does not appear if the voice of God's reply addressed to him was articulately heard by the people. The charge he gave is most significant of God's awful, and, by us the sinful children of men, His unapproachable sacredness. The mount was sanctified (set apart) from the multitude by bounds set around it; and the people were to keep their distance lest the Lord should break forth upon them. He knew better than Moses, who conceived that the charge



already given would prove security enough against the transgression of the limits that had been prescribed. So Moses was again sent down to renew the charge and bring up Aaron.

EXODUS xx. 1-11.—Did God so speak these words as to be articulately heard by the people? His preface to the Decalogue seems to evangelize it. Lord, let me appropriate Thee as my God, that I may serve Thee as I would a father and a friend, instead of hopelessly attempting to substantiate a rightful claim upon Thee as a Lawgiver. Incline me to the keeping of all these commandments; and whereas formerly they were graven on tablets of stone, may they now be graven on the fleshly tablets of my heart. Save me from the guilt of idolizing the creature, or of worshipping an imagination of my own heart, and not the God of the Bible as set forth to the understanding in Thy blessed Word. Thou art a God of judgment and jealousy; and it accords with Thy doings as well as Thy declarations—that children should suffer for the sins of their parents. Yet mercy is thy darling attribute—for if the judgments reach to the third or fourth, the mercy descends to thousands of generations; and we must wait all the widening, and coming enlargements of the blessedness in reserve for the human family, ere we can compare aright the goodness with the severity of God. Enable me, O God, to yield unto Thee the obedience of love. And O may I sanctify Thee in my heart, that no word of lightness or irreverence towards Thee may ever escape from my lips. O may I stand in awe of that God who will by no means clear the guilty or hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. Even in prayer may I fall into this profanation



—honouring Thee with my mouth while my heart is far from Thee. Lastly, among these duties of Thy first Table, may I never forget Thy Sabbath, but remember its place in the Decalogue. And there seems not a permission only, but a commandment to do my own work in the six days; not to be idle but industrious—not slothful in business. May Thy Sabbaths be my delight; and let me take cognisance of the Sabbath-keeping of all under my roof. Give me to hallow Thine own sacred day; and in the reason which Thou hast assigned for this observance, may I learn not to explain away the narrative of creation, but bear respect to the literalities of the Book of Genesis.

12-26.—And let me not forget that there is a second Table of the law as well as a first; and that unless I have that love of my neighbour which fulfils the one, neither have I the love of God in me by which the other is fulfilled. I cannot now pray that God would help me to honour my parents, no longer upon earth; but forgive, O Lord, all the dishonour and disobedience I have ever been guilty of towards them. I have much here to confess and to deplore; and do help me, O God, so to walk before my children as to be worthy of a parent's honour from them. And save me from the vindictive, save me from the licentious, save me from the avaricious propensities. Let me never, even by the least act or word of unfaithfulness, fall into deceit or dishonesty of any sort; and let me forget not that Thine is a law which reaches not only to the deeds but to the desires—telling us not to steal, but more than this, telling us not to covet. A vast deal might be made of the prohibitory character of the Decalogue—a character which belongs even to the fourth commandment—thou shalt *not* work on that day; and still more

directly to all the rest, saving the fifth, which is an affirmative precept.

The terror of the people and their consequent entreaties, and, above all, what the Lord says to Moses in verse 22, "Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven," all make for the people hearing, not only the voice, but the words of the voice. Their subsequent defections after this, their speedy traversal of the purpose for which God drew so near to them—even that they should sin not, and that His fear should be before their faces—these defections are truly wonderful. The special message He sent by Moses against idolatry, how soon was it trampled under foot.... Let me learn from the last verse the high estimation in which modesty and purity are held by Him who is the author of our constitution and our frame.

EXODUS XXI. 1-11.—It were well if a civilian or jurist would make a study of these judgments; and estimate on the principles of natural law, the wisdom of the Mosaic code. We should feel inclined to think that certain of the prescribed observances might mitigate somewhat the peremptory and decided way in which reformers of various classes would urge forward their own peculiar dogmata. The passage before us would on the subject of slavery make me willingly concede a compensation to masters on the abolition of it.

But I would not plead these directions as a sanction for slavery, any more than I would plead them as a sanction for bigamy. We must not forget that Judaism was confessedly to a certain extent a system of accommodation, when certain indulgences were granted to its disciples, because of the hardness of their hearts—certain practices

which God winked at, and which from the beginning were not so. The moral administration of God seems a progressive one, on the lower stages of which a preparation is carried forward for its higher stages.... These daughters seem to have been sold in the hope of being married to their masters, or some of their family. If disappointed in this hope either by the want of attachment, or the inconstancy of such as had betrothed them, they were not to be restrained from marrying with such as might redeem them for that purpose.... There is here a distinct sanction given to polygamy; but our Saviour tells us that this was but a temporary dispensation.

12-21.—I would allow greater weight to the authority of the Mosaic code in the matter of capital punishment than in the matter of slavery; and think it might serve to check and qualify the ultraism of those who denounce these altogether, when they read in the passage before us of the infliction of death for several offences, and further read of the magistrate in the New Testament that he bears not the sword in vain. In the case of accidental slaughter—or rather as nothing is accidental, for every thing falls out by the providence of God, so that when not designed by man it may be said that God was the doer, or delivered up the person killed unto his death—these cities of refuge were appointed to save him who slew his brother from the private avenger of blood—the magistrate not being the only avenger in these days.

The fifth, sixth, and eighth Commandments are here provided with certain civil and additional securities against the violation of them. Besides being in the Decalogue, or forming part of the regimen of conscience, they are put

into the law of the state, and there form part of the regimen of fear.

We read of men-stealers in the New Testament under the enumeration of those characters for whom the law was made. (1 Tim. i. 10.)

Let it well be remarked that the punishment of death was annexed to other crimes than those of murder, and let us learn from the infliction of it, not on the smiters only, but even the cursers of their parents, what a sacredness belongs to the filial duties.

There is a clear and obvious equity in the law of compensation for the hurt inflicted in a quarrel; and it behoved to have a salutary effect in restraining from the use of dangerous weapons.

Our natural sense of justice does not coalesce so readily with the law of tolerance for a master who beat his servant so severely that he died in a day or two. So much for slavery.

*May, 1842.*

22-36.—If a woman with child was in the way, so as to be in danger of being hurt in the event of a quarrel—this should lead to an abstaining from all violence, or at least to the transference of it from the place of her occupation. Else a penalty was liable, even should there be no mischief—but if a mischief, then it was to be punished by the general law of equal retaliation.

One is glad to meet with any consideration for slaves, any mitigation of the severities to which, in that comparatively iron age, they were exposed, and this without any legal reckoning against their masters.

The flesh of the ox that gored one to death was not the worse of this—yet one is interested by a natural repug-

nance being deferred to in Heaven's own statute-book, so that the flesh of the ox was prohibited from being eaten.... There is a most righteous difference made between the owner who was not aware of his ox's habit and the owner who knew of it beforehand. Yet, as if the necessary and absolute execution of him in the latter case were a severity which it was desirable to avert, a discretion is left with the friends of the deceased to take money from him rather than his life.... The distinction between a slave and a child is here strongly marked, in that if it was *only* a slave who had been gored to death, a certain specified sum of money must always be held a sufficient expiation.

There is an obvious equity in the law of compensation for the loss of an ox or ass; and the impression of this is enhanced by the provision respecting the disposal of the dead beast.

And this is still further enhanced by the more complex case wherewith the chapter concludes, and the complex adaptation of the law thereto. If the oxen quarrelled, and the aggressor be not known, nothing fairer than that the value both of the live and the dead ox should be equally divided between the two owners, and conversely.

EXODUS XXII. 1-15.—So large a restitution implies not merely indemnification for an injury, but punishment for a crime. The prescribed treatment of one found in the act of stealing furnishes a strong argument even from the Mosaic code against capital punishment for theft, or offences against property of any kind. It was only if killed in the dark that no reckoning was to be had for the blood of a thief. He was not to be killed knowingly—for the

proper punishment of theft is restitution or compulsory labour. The restitution for a stolen beast was not so great—only double, if found alive. The having proceeded to sell or kill argues not only a following up of the crime and so a perseverance, but adds to the difficulty and perhaps expense of the discovery . . . . The trespass in the fifth verse may at times be committed by the animal without any purpose or knowledge of it by the owner, but he should secure his cattle, so as that they shall not encroach upon a neighbour; and so there is no difference between the law of restitution, whether the animal go into a neighbour's field of itself or he have put it in.

The law of the sixth verse carries in it a rightful punishment for carelessness, which may prove as injurious to another as malice prepense is, though not so criminal.

The law of things given in trust recommends its own equity in the various particulars—save, perhaps, that some consideration might be required for the twelfth verse—though it be sufficiently obvious that there should be a difference between a thing stolen from its keeper and a thing torn—as being more able to secure what has been committed to his custody against the one than against the other.

The equity is also quite discernible of the law of borrowing. There is a difference between the owner being with or not with the animal he had lent, when it died or was destroyed; and also a difference between his having lent it with or without interest.

16-24.—The law now passes on to another department of morality, or from offences against the property to offences against the person of another. If the seduced female had been betrothed, the punishment was capital.



The dowry of virgins is probably what would be judicially held a right maintenance for unmarried females.

The law against witchcraft would justify a law against even the pretences to supernatural intelligence, by converse with the unseen. It has in it, at the very least, the guilt of raising money on false pretences; and whether it be a real or a pretended witchcraft, there is in it the guilt of doing homage to supernatural powers other than God.

The next law is against a most revolting crime, which, saving the outrage it inflicts on human feelings when known, can scarcely be regarded as an offence against society. It demonstrates then the wrath of God against impurity *per se*, though only implying self-degradation; and also sanctions the legislation that is directed against crimes which though not resented as direct injuries, yet are felt and resented as gross scandals.

Fornication is termed idolatry in Scripture, and unnatural impurity is idolatry in its grossest form. This gives the nineteenth verse a place in keeping with the eighteenth and twentieth verses—though we must often be satisfied, though unable to trace the connexion between topics which may be in juxtaposition, yet are set forth miscellaneously.

The following laws proceed from the tenderness of God, as the other from His justice or holiness. It is well to have the principle of reciprocity associated with benevolence as well as justice. We have it generally in our Saviour's golden rule, and especially when the Israelites are bidden be kind to strangers, as having been strangers themselves.

And it is well that we have a further exhibition of the gentleness of the Divine nature in the care of God

for the widow and the fatherless, and the indignation which He denounces against their oppressors.

25-31.—The law against usury seems here restricted to money lent to Jews, not to strangers. They were not a trading people, and when they did borrow, it was in general from necessity. The law of pledges affords another beautiful exemplification of the divine graciousness of God's care for the poor.

The gods in verse twenty-sixth are obviously the rulers; and it behoves us to abstain from speaking of them disrespectfully in virtue of their office, even when they do unjustly—as Paul felt he should have done when struck by the order of the High Priest. My God, save me from this transgression.

There is a very solemn religious importance attached in Scripture to the payment of tithes and appointed offerings; and a sacrilegious guilt to the neglect or violation of this duty—and the law of tithes seems still to be of unrepealed obligation.

The separation of the Jews from all other nations was fortified by certain special observances, some of which seem arbitrary enough, however fitted to serve this purpose. There looks a natural meaning or propriety, however, in the law of abstinence from the flesh torn by beasts, as if it were a provision against man degrading himself by partaking of that which had been previously eaten of by the inferior animals.

EXODUS XXIII. 1-11.—By the first prohibition of this chapter, both private calumny and false testimony before a court of justice—whether of one's own proper motion or in concert with others—are alike interdicted.

The idea of concert in the former verse, ushers naturally into the next on the general direction of not following a multitude to do evil, with a more special reference, however, to judges, who in giving sentence were not to be overborne either by the clamour of numbers at the bar, or by the authority of their colleagues on the bench; and with admirable rectitude they are warned against a partial, if an unfair bias, even on the side of the friendless and poor.

It is delightful to observe, even in this earlier dispensation, the germs of what has been regarded as peculiar to the morality of the New Testament—for we have here at least a law of service, if not of love, to our enemies.

The next seems a direction to judges against disfavour to the poor, as a former was against undue partiality on their side. Truth and righteousness on the one side, or wickedness on the other—in a word, character without regard to station or rank, is the all in all upon which the judgment of courts ought to hinge.

And so there follows also a charge against the pernicious influence of wealth upon a judgment which was put forth in those days, in the gross form of a bribe.

The mental substitution of oneself in the place of another, and the sympathy founded thereupon, are beautifully set forth in the law against oppression or unkindness to strangers.... The law of the Sabbatical year perilled the authority of the Mosaic code on a great palpable and recurring miracle. The poor were at liberty to gather the spontaneous produce of every seventh year.

12-19.—The merciful character of the Sabbath law is here brought out more strongly, because what was merciful in the purpose of it is stated more singly. That

purpose was rest ; and not only in the benevolent consideration of man's physical relief and comfort, but of what was required for the inferior animals—a law of mercy both to man and beast ; and as a further proof of its object not being exclusively a religious one—devised not for Israelites alone, but for the slaves and strangers that were within their gates, and so, over and above the object of religion, having also the object of rest and refreshment to all. Yet we must not overlook the religious importance of rest ; nor how much extreme exhaustion disqualifies, not only for spiritual contemplation, but for the discharge of ordinary duties. Let me only remark the effect of extreme weariness and exhaustion in operating as a temptation to excess, or the violation of sobriety.

And the two virtues of sobriety and circumspection are very nearly allied. The lusts of the flesh are opposite to the love of the Father, and so form the spiritual idolatries of the New Testament. Aught connected with one of these should not once be named amongst us, and we should keep an assiduous distance from all of them.

With the appointment of the three holy convocations, there is a repetition made of certain special observances. If repetition is to be viewed as the test or criterion of importance, then may we infer that the use of unleavened bread after the passover had the greatest stress laid on it under the old dispensation.—Heavenly Father, may this impress on us the solemn obligation of that great moral truth which is herein typified—even that, along with faith in Christ's propitiation, which might well be termed the eating of His flesh, there should also be the eating of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth—that along with the blessedness of the man unto whom

the Lord imputeth not iniquity, we should also have the blessedness of the man in whose spirit there is no guile.

... There are special observances, however, for which it were difficult to find a moral; and which were probably instituted for the purpose of signalizing, and so of separating the more the holy people from other nations. The law of not seething a kid in its mother's milk seems one of these.

20-33.—I regard the Angel here as the Angel of the Covenant; and this is not inconsistent with what is said of Him, that He will not pardon, though the great minister of forgiveness to a guilty world. Of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy who trample under foot the Son of God, and who, by provoking Him, have incurred the wrath of the Lamb. May I never, O God, neglect His great salvation, nor think that I am exempted thereby from the duty of obeying His voice—of doing the things which he says. In particular, let me beware of idols; and let no master have any share in my heart along with Christ, but may I serve Him only . . . The Jews were placed under a sensible theocracy; and one of its sanctions was prosperity to the obedient. God blessed their bread and their water, and promised other temporal good things, as well as security against temporal evils. God promised to send His fear before them; and, among other instruments for awakening terror in Canaan, to send hornets before them. Let us here remark the limitation which God is pleased to lay on his own miraculous agency, on the strength of which he could have caused the sudden recovery of the land from any desolation, however sudden, instead of which He chooses to drive out the Canaanites gradually, that the people of Israel may have

time to increase naturally and gradually up to the degree of keeping the land sufficiently peopled with men, lest the beasts should make head against them. Does not this also prove that the Canaanites, at the time of their invasion, very greatly outnumbered the children of Israel?... After having assigned the limits of their settlement, He reiterates his charge against the idolatries of the land on which they were entering.

EXODUS XXIV.—Observe how Moses was signalized above all others by his nearer approach to and more special converse with God. And the committal of the words which he heard to writing is a most important step in the economy of religion in the world.... The offering of sacrifices, previous to the express institution of the Levitic ritual, is quite of a piece with the opinion of an earlier institution of the sacrifices in patriarchal times. And how distinctly are here shadowed forth the two counterparts even of the Christian covenant, the propitiation, through which God promises forgiveness—the acceptance, in and by which the people promise obedience.—O my God, may I not count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; but all that Thou hast said may I do and be obedient.

And yet to how near and glorious a manifestation of Deity were others admitted along with Moses. He laid not his destroying hand upon them, so that they saw God and lived, yea, ate and drank, it would seem, in His presence. But their place of entertainment after all was the ante-chamber from which they seem to have descended till Moses was called (verse 12) to a second ascent, in which he was accompanied by Joshua—leaving the others to take charge of the congregation in his absence. But



even Joshua seems to have been left behind after remaining with Moses for six days, who was then called up to enter into the midst of the cloud—whence, at the same time an exhibition of the Divine glory was held forth in the sight of all Israel.

EXODUS xxv. 1-16.—We here observe the sanction of the Divine authority given to the voluntary principle, not certainly to the exclusion of the legal principle, or the principle of a national endowment for the support of religion, but as, at least, a competent way by which its expenses might be defrayed. It is here imposed not in the form of a tax, but authorized as a free-will offering. It was only in the present instance to be taken from those who gave willingly and from the heart—not from those on whom it was laid as a levy. But let us remember that a levy for such an object is not proscribed, yea, was exemplified on a large scale for the support of the Levitical priesthood, who had not only a stable national provision assigned to them, but for whose maintenance the legal and voluntary principles were brought into concurrent operation. There is no incompatibility between them ; and both are best.

17-22.—The tendency is to wonder at the minute and manifold directions given for the erection of so elaborate and complicated a structure as the Jewish tabernacle ; and we are apt to regard them as unworthy of the wisdom and enlargement of the Divine Architect. But truly they were not more mysterious than is the complex organism of our own bodies, where so many thousand parts and circumstances are made to meet together, every one of them essential to the functions and enjoyments of life—even though God, we are prone to imagine, could have

grafted all our capacities both of thought and feeling on a simple uncompounded elementary atom. In this respect, then, the tabernacle, constructed according to the pattern shown in the mount, is quite of a piece with the best and highest of our physiological structures, framed as they are according to the primary conceptions of Him who sitteth in the Heavens. But while unable to resolve in either case the mystery of such a complication, let us bless the Maker of all things for the palpable and known uses of whatever we find in both; and most of all let us prize that mercy-seat which is so beautifully emblematic of the great Propitiatory whom God hath set forth, (Rom. iii. 25,) through whom it is that He meets and holds communion even with the guiltiest of us all.

23-30.—The remark which we have made on the complexity of form in the tabernacle, is applicable also to the materials of its different parts. We cannot trace minutely the design of God in either; but as little can we so trace Him in the respective materials of the different parts of our own bodies—for we see not but how, with other kinds of substance as well as with other dispositions, as good an economy of life and thought might not have been upholden. Still it is interesting to remark what the Divine preferences are in a thing that we are so apt to look upon as purely arbitrary; as for gold, and more especially *pure* gold. It is like an homage by the Divinity Himself to the materialism which he hath formed, thus to signalize one species of it as more excellent than another, though we can see a moral purpose too in the very expensiveness of what was thus prescribed by Him, as testing the value which His worshippers had for the services of religion—the amount of their willingness for these, in that they

would not serve God for nothing; and on this principle, we apprehend, did our Saviour vindicate, nay applaud, the act of the woman who lavished upon his head a box of very precious ointment.... We shall have an opportunity afterwards for adverting to the shewbread.

31-40.—One should like moulds constructed of all the different things in the exact forms, and of the exact proportions, along with the very materials and decorations here prescribed, and then submit them to artists or men of taste, that they might pronounce on the beauty or fitness of the respective products. One can perceive at once the beauty of the candlestick; and to me it is truly interesting to remark the condescension, if I may so express it, of the celestial directory in thus specifying the minuter ornaments, as of knops and flowers and bowls like almonds. The sentiment is all the more enhanced when one connects all these workmanships with their pattern in the heavens, the pattern shown to Moses in the mount. It may be remarked, that the specifications of measurement and form are not here given for every article; but all may have been provided for by a general reference to this pattern.\* In verse ninth it is not only the pattern of the tabernacle which is spoken of, but “the pattern of all the instruments thereof.”

EXODUS XXVI. 1-14.—*Cunning-work—kenning-work*, such as can only be done by men of ken or knowledge. It is God, as we afterwards read, who puts this skill into men. So

\* My friend, Dr. John Muir of Glasgow, who is fond of taking illustrations to excess from the Old Testament, begged me to recommend him a Christian door-keeper—“For,” says he, “I read in my Bible that in the Temple of Solomon the very snuffers and snuffer-holders were made of pure gold.”

that He not only prescribes what is to be done, but gives the faculty of doing it—a principle which runs through the whole of the economy between God and man; and so as that, notwithstanding the undoubted part which man has in all the works of religious service, still it is God who worketh all in all.... The cherubims formed part of the embroidery of the curtains. The taches were clasps or tacks. We have here dimensions and numbers and colours among the specifications of the tabernacle, fixed and assigned by the Divine wisdom, and which we should like, as before, were submitted to the natural principles of good taste and propriety in man. It were an interesting comparison, with models constructed as accurately as may be of the temple and tabernacle, to make, between the Hebrew and Heaven-descended architecture of this fabric, and the Egyptian, or Grecian, or Gothic architecture of various ages in the world.... There were two outer coverings of coarser material provided for the tabernacle—the outermost of these being the strongest—leather, or the skins of beasts.

15-30.—From the curtains and coverings, the directory proceeds to the boards or frame-work of the tabernacle. The sockets were to be made of a less costly material, as being out of sight after the tabernacle was set up—the tenons or projecting bits from one board being buried in the corresponding sockets of another board. This remark, though minute, proves a respect by the Divine artificer to appearance—the most sightly parts being made of the most precious materials.

This is brought out still more palpably in the direction for overlaying the boards and bars with gold, and for making the rings, which I presume were visible, of gold

also. The practice of gilding proceeds on the desirableness of regaling the eye with a fair outside; and this is so far sanctioned by the orders given for the construction of the tabernacle. And it is to be remarked, that like as the holy place with all its furniture was made from patterns alone, so the tabernacle was constructed and reared according to a fashion shewed on the mount.

31-37.—The vail was embroidered with cherubims—representing, some would say, those angels who are ministering spirits, which minister to the heirs of salvation. The hooks, and what was visible of the pillars, were of gold. The sockets out of sight were of silver. The vail of separation between the holy place and the most holy, symbolizes the vail which overhangs and obscures from the saints who are on earth, the things of their coming heaven, the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. And the mercy-seat within the vail represents Him who is our propitiation (propitiatory) and who has entered within the vail. (Heb. vi. 20.)—O may our hope enter there too—that when fulfilled, we may be for ever with the Lord, when we shall see Him as He is; and having this hope, may we purify ourselves, even as Christ is pure. (1 John iii. 2, 3.)... The sockets of the pillars for the outer hanging were of brass.

EXODUS XXVII. 1-8.—The altar of burnt-offering was mainly of wood, but overlaid with brass; and I should imagine outside and inside so overlaid—else it might have taken fire from the grate within. The altar was not a solid mass, but hollow, and enclosed with wooden boards. The staves were of the same material with the altar itself, and alike overlaid. It was by these put through rings

that the altar was lifted up and supported, when carried from place to place. The altar was of a square form—the length and breadth being equal—but the height less than these. It is to be remarked, that the fashion of the altar was also shewed to Moses in the mount. And well might it be, for it was one of the most typical of all those objects presented to our notice in the Hebrew ritual—wherein were made those sacrifices which shadowed forth the propitiatory death that was accomplished at Jerusalem.

9-21.—There was no roof, I presume, to this outer court—the evidence of a climate in which hangings could be exposed without great risk of injury from uncertain or unforeseen rain. The materials of the pillars, hooks, and fillets were proportionally coarser than those of the tabernacle. I should like to know precisely the different parts here specified; but at present, at a distance from all my helps, I am not able to explain them. The Pictorial Bible is a likely guide and authority in these matters. As far as I understand, the front of the tabernacle was towards the east, and the length of the court was from west to east. The lamp, I presume, was placed on what in ch. xxvi. 35, is termed the candlestick; and which was situated on the south side of the space between the vail and door of the tabernacle, or south side of the holy place. The lamp was to burn perpetually; and to be looked after morning and evening by Aaron and his sons, who might therefore enter the holy place daily, while into the most holy place, the High Priest alone could enter—and that but once a year.

EXODUS XXVIII. 1-14.—There is here a distinct sanction given to the association of outward splendour with the office of the ministry—if not such as to make it impera-



tive or indispensable, at least as to condemn the intolerance of those who stand opposed to it. In the antipathy to priestly garments, and in the controversies which have been raised about them, I can take no share. Holy, as applied to garments, may be understood in its primitive sense, as denoting separation—or such garments as would distinguish or signalize by their glory and beauty from all others . . . . Observe here how the glory of men's wisdom is all to be ascribed to God. It is He who fills the wise-hearted with the spirit of wisdom . . . . For the detail, and nomenclature, and particular description of the various articles and parts in the dress of Aaron, I should imagine that we had best consult the Pictorial Bible.

A precious spiritual application may be made of the names of the tribes of Israel borne before the Lord by the High Priest. O may my great High Priest in the heavens present my name with acceptance before the throne of God.

15-29.—The same lesson is given forth still more impressively from the breastplate of judgment. The former names were placed on the shoulders of the ephod. Now they are placed on the breast of the High Priest, where he bears them upon his heart, in going in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And what an affecting while most cheering and encouraging thought that our great High Priest, the minister of the true sanctuary, so bears our names upon His heart—even that heart which is touched with the fellow-feeling of our infirmities, and can best represent our cause to Him who, Himself all love as well as holiness, knows our frames, and remembers that we are grass. My God, I have nothing to speak of in myself but infirmities. O look upon

me in Christ—who ever liveth to make intercession. In His name do I pray that my name might come with acceptance before Thee.

30-35.—Let not the difficulty which there is in determining the literalities of this subject deafen the moral which might be elicited therefrom. There has been much speculation about what may be called the materiel of the Urim and Thummim—though we should not miss much, I apprehend, though we supposed it to consist of none other than the precious stones, on which were graven the names of the children of Israel.... And there have been theories perfectly gratuitous advanced on the manner in which the High Priest obtained answers when he went into the holy place, and asked of the mouth of the Lord. We do not know; and perhaps the safest deliverance is the very general one, that in whatever manner the Divine will was manifested to the High Priest when thus asking counsel of the Lord, it was indispensable that he should make his approaches according to the prescribed or ordained ceremonial, and in certain vestments, whereof the breastplate of judgment had the most in it of a sacred or oracular character. The peremptory obligation on the High Priest when he entered the holy place to come in the bidden attire, is strikingly set forth in the thirty-fifth verse, where we are told that in moving to and from the holy place, the pontifical bells must be appended to the robe of his ephod—that he die not.

36-43.—The sentiment of holiness to the Lord we cannot misunderstand, and O that we adequately felt it. We are at a loss, however, for any antitype by which to make good an analogy with the forefront of the mitre viewed as a type. There seems a sacrificial virtue ascribed to it

here—as if Aaron in putting it on bore the iniquity of the children of Israel, and obtained acceptance for them—amid the sins, more especially of their holy things. Very precious, however, are the thoughts suggested by this ordinance, when it leads us to look on the acceptance not of our persons only, but of our services, for the sake of Christ, as if looked to not in themselves, but in the pure gold of our High Priest's righteousness. Give us, O Lord, acceptance in the Beloved—look upon us in the face of Thine Anointed. The crown of Aaron directs us then not so much to Jesus Christ as our Propitiation, but to Jesus Christ as the Lord our Righteousness. . . . In the last direction given for the clothing of the priests, we should recognise the Divine sanction given to decorum and modesty; and the Divine indignation against the first approaches or appearances of what is impure.—My God, let not the social virtues monopolize all my moral regards or reverence: I pray that Thou wouldst invest me with the beauties of holiness—and plant within me a resolute, sensitive, and high-toned recoil from all that is impure or unholy.

Exodus xxix. 1-11.—So soon as we enter on the description of sacrificial rites, we come to that which is eminently typical. The High Priest under the law offered—first for his own sins, then for those of the people; Christ had no sins of His own for which to offer, yet ere He could be a priest He behoved to have somewhat also to offer; and so by the once offering of Himself did He both consecrate Himself a Priest and make atonement for the sins of the people. . . . The washing with water indicates a value set by the God of Heaven Himself on mere outward cleanliness. Among my graver offences, I have been

vastly too negligent of what may be called the petite morale of religion, as well as the petite morale of society. . . . Aaron and his sons offered in this instance for themselves, and so laid their own hands upon the head of the bullock—signifying the transference of their own sins to the victim.—I would confess my sins, O God, over the head of Him who is my propitiation, of Him on whom Thou hast laid the iniquities of us all ; and in whose blood I would wash out my sins.

12-19.—We now begin to see the verification of the Apostle's saying, that almost all things are by the law purged "with blood." The allusions in the book of Hebrews to the observances of the Mosaic ritual are most valuable ; and prove of their observance that they are both the buttresses and the illustrations of evangelical truth. We see Christ even in the fourteenth verse, where we are told of the slaughtered victim being burned without the camp, when compared with Heb. xiii. 12, wherein we are told that for this reason Jesus also suffered without the gate. What decisiveness there is in the testimony of the last clause in the verse we are now handling—that it is a sin-offering.

Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of both the rams that were slain—both that which was made a whole burnt-offering, and that which was offered in another way—signifying of these sacrifices that they were for their sins in particular.

20-37.—The second ram was the ram of consecration—for the consecrating or the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for their special and holy services. It is thus that its blood was put on various parts of the body of the High Priest ; and also upon his garments—hence called holy

garments—which were to be worn afterwards by the son who should succeed him in the priesthood . . . . The wave-offering is understood to have been held in the hand, and vibrated horizontally or all round. The breast then was said to be *thy* part—Moses' part. Whose part was it in the subsequent history of the Jews, or who stood in Moses' place to receive this portion of the sacrifice? The shoulder, again, was made a heave-offering, and was the part of Aaron and his sons. It is understood to be heaved by vertical vibrations with the hand—perhaps even thrown up towards heaven and received back again as if from God, whose it was for the maintenance in part of His servants in the priesthood.

The ceremonial of anointing and consecrating the High Priest was, I presume, repeated at every new succession to the office in the manner prescribed at the first.

It formed part of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, that they and they alone should eat of the flesh allotted to them of the ram of consecration. None but they were to partake of it . . . . The work of consecration lasted seven days, and on each day a bullock was killed with the special design of consecrating the altar.

38-46.—On this altar there was offered a daily morning and evening sacrifice—day by day continually. The precious intimation here is that which connects this daily offering with the acceptance of God meeting and holding converse with the offerers—an acceptance not confined to the priests, but extending to all the children of Israel because of the now sanctified altar and sanctified tabernacle to which they drew nigh; and also because Aaron and his sons were duly sanctified to minister unto God in the priest's office.—Give me to feel my liberty of access to

God, and to draw nigh with all boldness through Him who is the minister of the true sanctuary—consecrated for evermore. In my perpetual remembrance of Him, may my prayers ascend morning, day, and night, unto Heaven, as the incense of a perpetual offering. Bring me forth of the Egypt of this world. Dwell in me and be my God. May the Spirit of Glory rest upon me; and may I be sanctified thereby.

EXODUS xxx. 1-10.—The altar of incense was of small dimensions, to be accommodated in the holy place, or placed before the vail, or on the hither side of the vail from the mercy-seat and right before it. It was to God the incense of a sweet-smelling savour; and there, accordingly, he met with the High Priest—met him in mercy as from the mercy-seat. In meeting him who appeared there for the people, He may be said to have met with all the worshippers of Israel; nor are we aware of a more beautiful symbolic representation than is here set before us. From Luke i. 10, we learn it to have been the practice for the people to pray without at the time of incense, that the prayers might rise with acceptance before God. And in Rev. viii. 3, 4, we read of an angel with a golden censer, who offered incense with the prayers of all saints before the Throne. And the smoke of the incense ascended with the prayers of the saints before God.—Heavenly Father, may every prayer of mine ascend to Thee perfumed with the incense of a Saviour's merits. Let me offer no strange incense. Let me trust in nothing but the intercession of Jesus Christ and the virtue of His blood. Let this be my perpetual incense; and Christ's the name in which I pray continually, even that name which is as



ointment poured forth. Nor was there wanting a sacrificial virtue here. For the blood of the sin-offering of atonements was put on the horns of the altar of incense once a-year. But Thine, O Jesus, is an everlasting consecration; and on the altar of Thy pure and perfect sacrifice may both my supplications and services find acceptance with Him who sitteth on the throne—because presented on that altar which is most holy unto the Lord.

*June, 1842.*

11-21.—By the ordination laid down here there was redemption-money to be exacted from the children of Israel every time that they were numbered, a process then which stood associated with sacred things and sacred services. We never could see in the narrative itself wherein the great guilt of David lay in numbering the people. Could it be in the unrecorded omission of the requisition specified in this passage?... The atonement-money was the same from those of all ranks or degrees of opulence. It was an atonement for souls, which are all of equal value in the eye of God.

The priests were required to draw nigh with water as well as blood. We read of the washing of regeneration. (Titus iii. 5.) But the *λουτρον*, which is the word, might signify the vessel in which the water was held; and so, in compliance with the analogy of the Mosaic ritual, do authors tell us of the laver of regeneration. Certain it is, that unless we are washed therewith we have no part nor lot in Christ. (John xiii. 8.) In drawing near unto God, it is not enough that our hearts be sprinkled from an evil conscience—that is, having no more conscience of sins, because purged therefrom by our faith in the sacrifice—

we must also have our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb. x. 22.)—My God, may I be sanctified as well as justified—washed from pollution as well as guilt—that I die not, or lest that by my remaining a wilful sinner, there shall remain to me no more sacrifice for sins. (Heb. x. 26.)

22-38.—Give me, O Lord, the anointing which remaineth, the unction from the Holy One—the pure and not the counterfeit—the true head—the true and living water. Let me not be satisfied with the virtue of nature—with the fervour of mere constitutional sensibilities, however ardent, and at the same time amiable. Give me fire from Thine own altar—the oil of grace and gladness from the fountain of Christ's own fulness. It is true that the oil here prescribed was not (verse 32) to be poured on the people. But under His blessed dispensation all who are His are kings and priests unto God.

The perfume was also holy—that is, not permitted for common use, but to be in the holy place only. It is not said here that this was the incense to be used for burning on the altar. My first impression on the reading of the passage was, that it was merely to be kept as a perfume in the holy place. But commentators make it to be the very material burned on the altar of incense. No other incense than such as God prescribes will avail for our acceptance with Him. No other merit than the pure and perfect merit of our Saviour.

EXODUS xxxi.—Here again are we led to refer all human wisdom to the higher wisdom which inspired it. O that we could look more beyond and above all secondary causes to Him who is the great cause of causes—*causa causarum*.

What more rare than to connect the skill of artificers with that breath of the Almighty which giveth understanding. They were put into the hands of Moses, and placed at his disposal, for the manufacture of the whole apparatus and furniture of the table, and the preparation of all the materials for its service.

Let me drink the spirit of all that is here said about the Sabbath—an observance as much distinguished from the temporary and ceremonial law of Moses as any other in the Decalogue. Let me never lose sight of the sign or memorial first of creation and then of redemption. Let it therefore be upheld as part and parcel of a perpetual covenant—a day of holy rest, and the delighted observance of which is one of the most decisive tests of a renewed and godly nature. And let it not be a fatiguing, but a reposing cessation from the toils and cares of the every-day world. And let such be my meditations and exercises that I may not be exhausted, but strengthened and refreshed thereby.

What a sacred memorial would these Tables have proved had they been preserved! Written with the finger of God! O may this law be now written with the Spirit of the living God in the fleshly tables of my heart!

EXODUS xxxii. 1-6.—Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights; and ere that time had expired the children of Israel made a marvellous exhibition of their perversity—perhaps the most marvellous of all. That they should so have conducted themselves at the foot of Mount Sinai, after the recent manifestations which they had witnessed from its summit, was indeed most astonishing. They could not stand the trial of a few

weeks, or for so brief a period be left to themselves. And that Aaron should have been so carried away with them, is beyond expression wonderful. What could he mean after he had made the molten calf, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel?" What could he mean by his proclamation—"To-morrow is a feast to the LORD?" thus identifying an idol-god with Jehovah. Did he mean that the image was not to be the object of their adoration, but God through the image? This is one of the pleas of idolatry; but the history in this passage tells how it is regarded by Him who judgeth righteously.—What a profound mystery is man—how great the waywardness and deceitfulness of his heart—how deep the carnality of his nature in all ages—how prone to the great master-sin of ungodliness; and, all in all, how desperately wicked!

7-18.—Well might it be said of the Israelites that they had turned aside quickly. Altogether, this is a truly remarkable passage in the history of God's intercourse with men; and throws great light on the procedure of His administration, and on the influence which by the methods of His government the mind and doings of the creature have over the mind and doings of the Creator. He, in the first instance, is represented as moved with wrath against their monstrous defection. God is angry with sinners every day; and on this the day of their greatest provocation His wrath waxed hot against them.

But mark, in the second instance, the effect of Moses' remonstrance and counter-pleading on the side of mercy. And it prevailed; for the Lord repented Him of the evil. Take an enlarged view of this whole process; and it will be seen, that this efficacy of prayer or efficacy of expostulation, implies no subjection on the part of the Creator—

as if He needed to be informed by His creatures, or needed to be influenced by them. The very process of reflection here described—as first, of the anger, and secondly, of the relenting, might all have been gone through without the intervention of the creature or of his prayers at all. And certainly, when viewed aright, there is nothing in this intervention which takes off either from the free spontaneity or perfect sovereignty of the Godhead. He chooses through the medium of a creature, as of Moses in the passage before us, to come at the ultimate conclusion; and so institutes the law of prayer and of its fulfilment, that He might bring His servants into a conformity with Himself by their taking part in the very sentiments which Himself approves, and on which, with or without their prayer, He would have actually proceeded. Himself suggests the prayer; and His very fulfilment thereof implies its being agreeable to the will of God.

Moses in departing from God's immediate presence seems to have taken up Joshua, who had waited without and alone.

19-35.—And so Moses from first to last seems to have felt in the way that was right, for he felt as God did. His anger waxed hot as God's did. We cannot, however, but regret his breaking of the Tables, graven as they were by the very handwriting of God—but thus lost to the world, as if a memorial too sacred for human custody.... His remonstrance with Aaron drew out from his brother a narratory confession, but certainly a very lame apology.

It scarcely affords a meaning adequate to the context, if we understand by this nakedness the mere literal stripping of their ornaments by Aaron. The shame to which they exposed themselves from enemies, whether at a

distance or in after ages, was the disgrace of their most unnatural defection from the God of whom they professed to believe that He had so manifested Himself.... Moses' procedure was further analogous to God's treatment of the people, in that he sent a sword amongst them, while from Heaven there was sent down a plague. The human ministers of vengeance were consecrated, in that they stood apart from the multitude, who seem to have fallen helplessly before them; and their service was acceptable, as appears from the blessing that was promised to them. Lastly, as God, notwithstanding his righteous indignation, did not finally cast off these His rebellious people—so Moses, although his anger waxed hot against them, laboured to effect their reconciliation with God. He prayed for their forgiveness, and in strong terms too, expressive of his desire to die rather than see the destruction of his nation. He was willing to be made a sacrifice for them; and in this respect was a fit type of that Prophet who should be like unto himself. Paul uttered a similar aspiration. But God had in view a better Sacrifice—even Him whom He sent to go before them, and who was the Shepherd of Israel. Still He visited them for this their great transgression. He forgave, yet took vengeance on their inventions.

EXODUS xxxiii. 1-11.—God out of Christ is a consuming fire; and therefore He would not go up in the midst of the stiffnecked children of Israel. In Christ, He is a reconciled Father; and so He sent the Angel of the Covenant to go before them.

The threat of coming up in the midst of them and consuming them in a moment, had been made to them before.



But it was suspended till they had put off their ornaments and in this attitude of penitence, mercy was awarded to them. May we give up all that is dear to nature, the lust of the eye and pride of life, that we may have mercy from God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The tabernacle, now placed without the camp, was the place of inquiry for every man who sought the Lord, to inquire or ask for counsel and intercession. The people seem to have been effectually humbled—if we may judge from their acts and expressions of homage, and longing regards after Moses as he proceeded to the tabernacle.

And they were made to behold another manifestation of the long-suffering God. For the time they were solemnized by it.

Moses acted the part of a mediator between God and the people—admitted to free and friendly converse with God, and returning to the people with the tidings of his interview. And Joshua was left in the tabernacle till Moses should come back to it.

12-23.—God had before said that He would send an angel, but He had not said what angel. Moses seems to have felt that an angel, at least if a created being, was not an equivalent for the presence of God Himself. . . . “I know thee by name,” carries in it the expression of an intimate and favourable regard. Moses found in this a plea for God’s kindness. Give me to experience that grace which Thou hast said I enjoy in Thy sight; and consider also the Israelites that they are Thy people. Show me therefore Thy way—how Thou purposest to proceed in the further prosecution of this enterprise—for Thou hast announced a change of procedure. God on this promised His presence to go with Moses; but what he intimated

before was an angel—the angel then of His presence—the Lord Jesus Christ—a most sufficient guide; for he who hath seen the Son hath seen the Father. Let us imitate the piety of Moses by imploring the presence of God with us in all our ways; and declining from all on which we cannot hope or seek for His countenance.

There is an obvious desire now excited in the heart of Moses to know more of God. We think the previous converse fitted to awaken it. God's reply is most instructive. You cannot see my face; but I will make experience of my goodness—the only manifestation which humanity can yet have. My person you cannot behold—my works you may; and more especially my works of favour to yourself.... In many places the name of God signifies His goodness; and to make known His name to any person is to put forth His kindness on him. This I will do to thee; but as to others I will be gracious, and show mercy to such as I choose—but you I make the subject of an absolute promise.... Of the sublime and mysterious passage which terminates this chapter, we can only say in the general, that there is a limit beyond which the manifestation of God to man cannot go; and that to this uttermost limit Moses was probably brought.

Exodus xxxiv. 1-9.—The former Tables were the work of God—the present Tables are the work of Moses; but the handwriting seems to have been God's as before. He was ordered to come up to Mount Sinai, but now unaccompanied. Aaron had in particular made himself unworthy to come with him even part of the way.

The Lord did not show His person, but proclaimed His name. Let our faith in the Word, meanwhile, suffice us.

And what a name—combining all the attributes of which the Gospel was the manifestation—the goodness and the truth; the mercy yet the vengeance. He will by no means clear the guilty, for His justice must be satisfied. Yet mercy rejoices even against this, for He can be just while the justifier of those who believe in Jesus.

Moses was not yet, even after this gracious declaration, freed from his anxieties lest God should withdraw His presence. The intimation that He would not go with Israel Himself, but only send an angel, seems yet to trouble him. There is no express answer to this recorded. But Moses might well have spared his disquietudes. No doubt it was an angel which was to be sent, but He was the Angel of the Covenant . . . . Observe the mixture of confession with supplication in the address of Moses. He confesses the Israelites to be a stiffnecked people, while he prays that God would pardon their iniquity and their sins—he includes himself—pardon *our* iniquity and *our* sin.

10-24.—Though covenant often signifies an absolute disposition on the part of God singly—yet in this passage there are two parties, and a part to be done by each of them. The subsequent signs and miracles were both the fulfilment and explanation of God's part. The drying up of Jordan, the falling down of the walls of Jericho, the standing still of the sun, and countless other interpositions, were among the marvels and terrible things here spoken of. On the other hand, the Israelites had a part assigned to them—even as we Christians have. They were to abstain from all the idolatries of Canaan; and to touch not any unclean thing. In turning to Christ we must forsake all—renouncing the world, and all our idols.

And we must keep the feast of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth . . . . The proportion of every thing which God reserved for Himself strongly corroborates the argument for tithes ; and if not for the legal ordination of them in these days—at least for the voluntary surrender of a certain part of our income to objects of Charity and Piety. May I honour Thee with my substance, O God.

Let my Sabbath not be a working-day ; and even in the things of sacredness, let me not so exercise myself as to violate its character as a day of rest.

And let the Jewish festivals, though nothing analogous thereto be kept up among ourselves, let them at least mitigate all intolerance against the festivals of the Church of England.

What a noble and impressive standing miracle does God pledge Himself to maintain in the midst—in that all invasion of enemies should be warded off, at those seasons when the children of Israel assembled to keep the appointed feasts at Jerusalem.

25-35.—There is here a repetition of what was before enjoined. Can it be that God commanded twice, or that Moses has recorded twice ? Another remarkable analogy is, that the same thing is stated of his second visit that was stated of his first to the mount—that he was with the Lord forty days and forty nights.

The shining of Moses' face was like a reflexion to the children of Israel of that glory to the direct view of which he himself was admitted. But even this they could not bear ; and so Moses had to put on a vail. Still it was an evidence to them of the miraculous intercourse that he was carrying on in their absence ; and a fresh display of that forbearance which would thus heap one sign and one

demonstration upon another—after all the abuse they had made of their high privileges. This passage is allegorized by the Apostle in 2 Cor. iii.—My God, may the veil be taken from my heart. May I be admitted into closer and fuller manifestations of Thyself. May I by the Spirit be made to behold with open face the glory of the Lord, and be changed into His image from glory to glory. Looking unto Him, may I be made like unto Him.

EXODUS xxxv. 1-10.—I desire to cherish the utmost reverence for the Sabbath; and though I might dispense with the rigours and literalities of its Jewish observation, let me not, in so doing, discard the homage which is due to it as an immutable part of the Divine law. In the climate of the Hebrews, the kindling of a fire might not have been the same work of necessity that it is here—yet let me learn from this injunction to dispense with as many as possible of the common household operations.... Here there is an express and Divine sanction given to the voluntary principle. Moses is authorized, not to levy a tax for the support of religion, in this passage at least, but to collect what the people were willing to give for its support. They who were of a willing heart are encouraged to come forth with their offerings. God commanded certain things to be made; but He confided the finding of the means and the materials to the liberality of His worshippers. Let it be carefully observed, that in the present instance the application to be made of this liberality was to the erection of an ecclesiastical fabric, not to the maintenance of ecclesiastical labourers. It does not appear that they who gave of their skill gave it on any other footing than they who gave of their substance. The wise-hearted artificers

who wrought at this service seem to have been such whose hearts stirred them up; or who gave their skill voluntarily, even as the others gave their substance voluntarily. And both only gave to the Lord what was His own—for what have we, be it wisdom or wealth, which we did not receive from His hands?

11-29.—Here follows an enumeration of the various things which entered into the apparatus and furniture of the tabernacle.

Each contributor gave of that which he had. Their hearts stirred them up to liberality; and it is right for the equipment of a Church, and for the upholding of a religious service, that we should encourage and avail ourselves of this feeling. An opening is here held forth to all who were willing in spirit, or in other words, to the offerings of voluntarism. Most of them seem to have given in kind, according to the materials which they possessed; and some gave the important contribution of their skill and industry—as such of the women who were wise-hearted and did spin with their hands, and brought of that which they had spun. It is obvious that the exercise of the good principle which prompted all their services, was calculated to strengthen the principle; and also that the sympathy and full participation of so many therein was fitted to harmonize the community, and bind them together by the tie of a most wholesome and beneficial sentiment. Altogether, the moral effect of such a combination for such a purpose must have been of the happiest influence on the spirit and character of the people; and I have ever thought on this ground, that the utmost scope and countenance should be given to such free-will offerings even in the present day.



30-35.—It follows not, though the Lord put that honour on Bezaleel expressly to name him, that Bezaleel acted by the force of a commandment, and not of pure good-will. The Lord had put wisdom into his heart and that of others; but we afterwards read that their own heart stirred them up to the service. And God put it into the hearts of Bezaleel and Aholiab to teach others, who received their skill, therefore, proximately from them, but primarily and efficiently from God. This is an example by which what takes place in spiritual matters might also be illustrated. God endows and qualifies men to be the teachers of Christianity; and He is also to every Christian the author of all the spiritual wisdom which he possesses. Yet though taught by Him this does not supersede the work of human instructors, for it is generally through them that He teaches the knowledge of Himself, and of Jesus Christ whom to know is life everlasting. While depending then on the Spirit of God for a right understanding of the things of God, let us avail ourselves of all the human helps which He has so often sanctioned both by the examples and the exhortations of His Word.

EXODUS xxxvi. 1-7.—What the Lord commanded was that such and such work should be done, not that such and such contributions should be rendered to it. These He left free; and accordingly they were brought in the form of free-offerings. The commandment was upon Moses, however, to proclaim and receive these offerings, and then turn them to the use which had been appointed. Still God is all in all. He put the wisdom to devise in the hearts of some—the willingness to give in the hearts of others.—Shower down such gifts and graces, O

Lord, on the friends of Scotland's people and Scotland's Church !

- It is delightful to be told, as we are here, of the sufficiency, nay, exuberance of the voluntary principle for the object assigned to it. No argument, however, for an exclusive voluntarism. It is in striking conformity with human nature that for the erections, as in this instance, of the tabernacle, God should not have imposed a levy upon His worshippers, but drawn on their free-will—whereas for the maintenance of the ecclesiastical labourers a legal provision was instituted. It was thus that we aimed at the prosecution of Church Extension—subscriptions for the places of worship—an endowment for their officiating ministers.

8-19.—Then follows a description, first of the fabric, and afterwards of its furniture—a carriageable fabric suited to the present migration of the children of Israel, and which indeed remained in that state long after they had settled in the Land of Promise. It could be taken down at one place, as in the wilderness, and set up in another, as in Canaan, where at length it was succeeded by a Temple. Many commentators may have carried their typifications of this further than I can follow them, yet are there many things, which, though not expressly designed to prefigure before-hand, might afterwards be aptly and legitimately employed as illustration. Our perishable body, for example, is even by an Apostle termed the earthly house of our tabernacle. It is to be dissolved, (*καταλυθεται*) loosened and taken down—to be replaced by an enduring temple—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Meanwhile, we that are in this tabernacle do groan, waiting for the redemption of the body.

And Peter, another Apostle, says,—“ So long as I am in this tabernacle,” and “ knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle.”—O my God, give me Thy Spirit as the earnest of Thine inheritance—for unless our bodies be the temples of the Holy Ghost here, they will not be fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body hereafter.

The tabernacle, in all its parts and materials and dimensions, was made with wisdom ; and so are we bound to believe were our bodies made—with perfect wisdom, so as that each part has a meaning that might be assigned for it, whether we have or have not been able to find it out.

20-38.—And there is another general analogy between the two fabrications, in that for the completion of both, hard and rigid as well as yielding and flexible materials are employed—as boards for the support of the tabernacle, and bones for the support of the human body—joints and sockets for the requisite ligaments both of the one and of the other—curtains of hair and skins for the first, coverings of skin and flesh for the second. And the particular uses of many special parts could be enumerated—which does not, however, throw any light on the transcendental question—Why such a complex system for the phenomena of life or sentiment in either? If we will be speculative, we shall speedily arrive at the limit of our faculties ; and must be satisfied with our knowledge of the *quid*, and along with it our ignorance of the *quomodo*.

To both, also, has He given a seemingly exterior: rich and ornamental gold and embroidery for the one—a skin of fair and beauteous appearance for the other, overlaying what the eye would recoil from as loathsome and offensive.

The vail described in verse 35, is the second or inner vail, which separated the holy place from the most holy—the embroidery of which was cherubims.

The hanging of the thirty-seventh verse is the outer vail, of less costly and less high-wrought materials than the other, and whose sockets were of brass instead of silver.

EXODUS xxxvii. 1-16.—Then follows, after a description of the fabric, a description of the furniture of the tabernacle. The instructions for the making were all detailed particularly before; and the same particularity in the account of the making according to these instructions does give rise to repetitions which we might beforehand think vain and needless; but in which it is our part to acquiesce—drawing, at the same time, such lessons as the phenomenon might appear to us warrantably and fairly to suggest. One obvious use of this particularity was to show that Moses acted agreeably to the directions which had been given in making the tabernacle in strict and minute conformity with the pattern showed to him in the mount.

The cherubims were not merely on the ends of the mercy-seat, but out of the ends—so as to be of one piece, not with each other merely, but with the mercy-seat between them. (Ex. xxv. 19.)

The description of many of the things given here, is almost word for word, as the making of the table, &c., the same with the prescription given in the 25th chapter.

17-29.—In the description of these various articles, it is well to observe that there are parts not for use only, but parts which serve no discernible purpose, save that of ornament. The candlestick would practically have answered all its mere utilitarian purposes as well as though there

had been neither knops nor flowers; and so too might our vegetable structures without so rich an efflorescence of gay and variegated blossoms. It is pleasing to contemplate such exhibitions of beauty, as designedly set forth by God to regale the taste and the eye of man. Even our Saviour dignifies this object of the Divine workmanship—when he says of the lilies of the field, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Though the prescription and the description be very much alike, they do not proceed in the same order. The altar of incense is prescribed in the thirtieth verse.

It should be remarked, however, that in the first recital we are told not only how things are to be made, but what use is to be made of them—as of the anointing oil in ch. xxx. 26-30.

EXODUS xxxviii. 1-8.—So accurate is the counterpart between the order and the execution, that the one could in many instances be translated into the other by a mere change of tense. What is told to Moses in former chapters as the thing he shall make, is in these chapters told by him as that which was made.

But the most noticeable thing here is the contribution made by women of their looking-glasses—which in these days were made of polished brass. One likes to meet not only with the characteristic zeal of the sex in things pertaining to sentiment; but with the countenance given to it, and the record made of it—as if for our admonition, on whom the latter ends of the world have come. Certain it is that they are highly available, whether in the form of agency or of direct contributions for the service of religion. It would look as if they sustained some official

character, in virtue of which they assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And truly, they may be of the greatest use still in an official character—as the deaconesses, for example, of a church or parish.

9-21.—The hooks of the court pillars are said to have been for hanging up the carcasses of the beasts slain in sacrifice. The pillars at the entry of the tabernacle, as well as at the place of separation, were also furnished with hooks—perhaps for hanging clothes of service, and other things used by the priests. The gate on the east side of the court was twenty cubits from side to side—there being a length of fifteen cubits on each side of the gate to the north-east and south-east corners of the court. The gate then required twenty cubits' length of hangings, which had a breadth as well as a length—this breadth being five cubits. But when these hangings were placed lengthwise along the gate—then their breadth became height, and thus do I understand the expression in verse eighteenth, "The height in the breadth was five cubits." Poole understands that the twenty-first verse relates not to what follows, which is the account of the gold and silver, but to what precedes—which gives an account of the things committed to the charge of the Levites.

22-31.—It appears from this passage that other than voluntary funds were used in the erection of this tabernacle. There was a levy as well as an offering. Of this levy we read in Exodus xxx. 13. There was also a similar composition of the legal and the voluntary for the erection of the Temple. Still they drew more upon the voluntary than upon the legal in raising the ecclesiastical fabric, but more on the legal than the voluntary for the maintenance of ecclesiastical labourers. Still in each they



admitted of both ingredients—compounding the one with the other; while in our day they have conflicted the one against the other. We confess that our preference is for both; and that what we desiderate is a joint and harmonious operation between them. We should like a legal provision for every parish minister, and, withal, a free opening and encouragement for the kindness of parishioners towards them. I should particularly like that on the death of a clergyman, when feelings were fresh and powerful, it were the regular practice that a subscription should go round for his family.

EXODUS xxxix. 1-7.—It is well that these clothes which were made for the glory and beauty of the priestly office, should also be called clothes of service. Ministers are the servants of the people—yet not so as to prostrate their own convictions or the liberty of their own consciences before the object of pleasing them. They are also called holy garments—garments of separation by which to distinguish them from laymen—serving therefore as a warrant, if not an obligation, to maintain the like separation even at present; and I further think that the costliness and splendour of these vestments should mitigate somewhat the prejudices of our modern sectarians on this subject. We observe that Matthew Henry in his Commentary makes discovery of his Puritanic tendencies and affections.

The names of the children of Israel borne upon the shoulders of the High Priest, form a significant emblem of our relation to Him who hath taken the mediatorial government upon His shoulders, and who presents our names with acceptance before God.

8-21.—The precious stones set in the breastplate, and

each representing one of the tribes of Israel, show forth still more significantly the relation in which the spiritual Israel—the redeemed and the sanctified stand to their great High Priest in the heavens—where He appears for us an Advocate and Intercessor at the right hand of God. O give me rightly to consider Him who is the Apostle and High Priest of my profession. May I have more faith in Him, and then will I have more of feeling and friendship towards Him. More especially, let me apply the declarations and promises of the Gospel to myself; and then will I take the comfort of thinking that He bears me upon His heart—that the great Forerunner within the vail is there to plead for me. O that I ventured my all upon Him, and kept close by Him as the Lord my Righteousness. What a blessed peace would then take possession of my heart; and in quietness and in confidence I should have strength.

22-31.—And what a fit succeeding topic for reflection is supplied by the few but emphatic words of “Holiness unto the Lord.” Let me never disjoin the peace of the Gospel from its holiness. The great High Priest in the heavens is holy; and He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. Christ apprehends his disciples for the purpose of making them holy; and it is their part to apprehend that for which they are apprehended—in other words, to press onward and possess themselves of holiness. I would open my mouth, O God, do Thou fill it. I would present my emptiness to the fulness that is in Christ Jesus. I have nothing in myself to speak of but my own infirmities. O may the power of Christ rest upon me. May the Spirit of Christ be given to me. May His likeness be impressed on my soul. May

His strength be perfected in my weakness. O let me ever depend on Him for grace as well as for mercy that I may partake of His whole salvation.

32-43.—Having received the first principles of the oracles of God, let us go on unto perfection. With the faith of the Gospel in our hearts, as the rudimental source of holiness, let these be followed up by the obedience of the Gospel.... Let us, as is here recorded of the children of Israel, do all that the Lord commandeth us. They made, it is said, all the work which had been assigned to them; and they did it spontaneously with an overflowing goodwill—some contributing of their substance—some giving the labour of their hands—others applying their wisdom and skill to the rearing of a tabernacle for the Lord.—So enlarge my heart, O Lord, that I may run in the way of Thy commandments; and that it may be both my meat and my drink to do Thy will. May I delight in yielding unto Thee spiritual sacrifices acceptable in Jesus Christ; and O that I had the comfort of knowing that my obedience was accepted—even as the children of Israel must have known the satisfaction they had given to Moses—seeing that he blessed them.

*July, 1842.*

EXODUS XL 1-16.—The orders for the various parts of the tabernacle had been already made and executed. We have here the order for the bringing of those parts together, so as to set up the tabernacle. It is remarkable that the new-year's-day was signalized by the erection. It was on this day that Hezekiah sanctified the temple, or rather began this work. (2 Chron. xxix. 17.) We should abound in good works every day, but these examples make it warrantable for us to convert any noted period of time into

an occasion for some remarkable act whether of philanthropy or piety . . . . Doubtless, there is here the repetition of directions previously given. The order then was that such and such things should be done. The order at present is that they should be done now. This applies more particularly to the anointing of the various parts and vessels as well as the priests. Compare this chapter with chapter xxx. 26, &c.

17-23.—The second year means the second year since their departure from Egypt. The rearing of the tabernacle seems to have been the work of a day. After all the separate members of the structure had been prepared, they could soon have been put together. The tabernacle was set up by the children of Israel even in their migratory state; as it could be taken down, and carried in parts in their journeys from place to place. The tabernacle in the wilderness was at length succeeded by a temple in the land of Canaan . . . . The frequent repetition of each particular being done as the Lord commanded Moses, carries in it a very impressive reference to the Divine will.—Give me, O Lord, to do whatsoever things Thou hast commanded, not in the expectation that I can finish the work so as to earn the wages of a full obedience; but in humble reliance on the finished work of Him who is the Lord my Righteousness, and in grateful compliance with His blessed will. O that He saw in me of the travail of His soul and was satisfied!

24-38.—Is there any difference but in expression between the tabernacle and the tent of the congregation?—or does the one apply to its interior and the other its exterior—the glory of the Lord filling the former, and the cloud resting on the latter? However this may be, we

have here another sensible demonstration of the Godhead—another sign given after their provoking heedlessness of all former signs. But this cannot go on indefinitely; for if the heedlessness be persisted in, then verily no sign shall be given to this generation. We have many tokens of the inaccessibleness of God under the olden dispensation. We cannot behold the glory of the Lord but in the face of Jesus Christ. Give us, O Heavenly Father, thus at all times to regard Thee. This daily manifestation of God seems to have lost its miraculous influence by being a daily miracle. The preternatural had no more effect than a natural phenomenon. The rarity of miracles seems indispensable to their impression—which may help to explain the perversity of the Jews—though the hardness and blindness and carnality of subjective human nature must also be taken into account.

#### LEVITICUS.

LEVITICUS I.—The announcements of this book seem to follow immediately on the setting up of the tabernacle—thus placing the end of Exodus and beginning of Leviticus in juxtaposition with each other—as the contiguous parts of a continuous narrative. The great doctrine of the Gospel is here set forth in symbol. We have here the rule or method of the free-will offerings of the people set down. Each behoved to offer of his own voluntary will. It is by an act of the will that we lay hold of Christ as our propitiation. If we do not come unto Him for this purpose, it is because we are not willing so to come. (John v. 40.) I would confess my sins over the head of the Great Sacrifice—even of Him, the utterance of whose name rises to heaven like



the incense of a sweet-smelling savour.... The kind of sacrifice was varied in these days according to the circumstances of the people, from the more to the less costly. But in Christ Jesus there is adaptation for all. His Gospel is preached to the poor; and all are invited to the benefits of His atonement without money and without price.

LEVITICUS II.—The meat-offerings had nothing sacrificial in them. They were expressions of homage and thankfulness; and may therefore be held as typifying the deeds of our new obedience—after that we had entered into reconciliation through the blood of Christ. A sin-offering requires the death of a victim, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Yet these offerings had somewhat of the nature of a sacrifice—a portion of them was burnt upon the altar; the remnant being for Aaron and his sons. And so also our deeds of new obedience are termed sacrifices. (Heb. xiii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 5, &c.) They are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Associated with Him they are well-pleasing to God—even as what of the meat-offering was burned upon the altar was of sweet savour unto the Lord. Leaven and honey were prohibited from the meat-offerings burnt by fire. Yet it would seem as if, with the first-fruits spoken of in verse 12, honey and leaven might be offered, as indeed appears competent from Lev. xxiii. 17; and 2 Chron. xxx. 5;—but in this case, of course, they could not be burned on the altar. A meat-offering of the first-fruits is distinct from the legal offering of first-fruits required by law—it being voluntary. There was neither leaven nor honey allowed in it; and, accordingly, we read that it is an offer-



ing made by fire unto the Lord.—Lord, having received by faith Christ Jesus—our passover sacrificed for us—let me now purge out this old leaven, and keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

LEVITICUS III.—A peace-offering requires the shedding of blood. Anterior to the great peace-offering we were all the children of wrath. Christ made peace through the blood of His cross, that He might reconcile all things. And the peace-offering of the law in like manner required the life of a victim—which behoved to be without blemish—even as Christ's blood was as that of a lamb without spot and without blemish. As the offerer laid his hand on the head of the victim, so would I lay hold on Christ, confessing my sins over Him—that I may obtain pardon and peace.... The blood was poured out about the altar; and all the fat was burnt: and as if, in connexion with this, it is enjoined under the Mosaic law that neither fat nor blood should be eaten. But of the fat there was an exception made when interlarded with the common flesh. And certain it is that there was the express allowance of fat of some sort. (Neh. viii. 10.) All the fat of verse 16 refers to the fat before specified.

LEVITICUS IV. 1-12.—Even the sins of ignorance cannot be expiated without blood. There is a wilful ignorance, an ignorance which might have been prevented, had the man done all he might. Still, though sinful on this ground, they are not so heinous as sins done presumptuously. The sinfulness of doing wrong through ignorance speaks to us of the duty that lies upon us to acquire that knowledge—for the lack of which many perish.... There is

a diversity of senses in which the expression of verse 3 is understood—"according to the sin of the people." My own preference is for it meaning such sins as the laity may commit through ignorance, in contradistinction to what may be called from this sins of holy things, which may be incurred by the priesthood, from the defect or error of their peculiar and sacred services. The peculiarity of the required sacrifice, in this case at least, from those already prescribed in the book of Leviticus, seems to lie in this—that some of the blood is brought within the tabernacle, to be put on the horns of the altar of sweet incense. It was at that altar where the priest himself did service. The bringing in of the blood within the congregation may be said to typify the power of Christ's atonement in giving efficacy to His intercession.

13-26.—The sin done through ignorance must be known before expiation can be made for it. The priest whose guilt had to be atoned for laid his hand on the head of the victim; but here the elders lay their hands on the head of the victim offered for the people—as being their representatives. Let it be observed that here, too, part of the blood was put on the horns of the altar within the tabernacle . . . . How preciously evangelical are the expressions of verse twentieth, "Shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them." There is much of the weight and significancy of Gospel truth in the book of Leviticus . . . . There is a costlier sacrifice prescribed for the priest and for the congregation, than for a ruler. Is this because the sin of ignorance in a priest is worse than in a ruler? and though this does not hold true of a single member of the congregation, might not the numerous sins of the whole congregation be held as requiring a costlier

sacrifice than that of a single person, the ruler, even though it were more guilty in him to have sinned through ignorance than in one of the common people?

27-35.—The only difference between the sin-offering of the ruler and that of one of the common people is, that the former brought a male kid, the other a female, with the additional privilege of bringing a female lamb instead. Whether this implies a costlier offering on the part of the ruler is uncertain; but certain it is, that with his opportunities and in his higher sphere of life, his ignorance is all the more inexcusable. There is one respect in which the offerings of these two resembled each other; and differed from the offerings for the priest and congregation. The blood of the former was not, like that of the latter, either sprinkled before the vail of the tabernacle, or put on the horns of the altar within. All now have a like access by faith within the vail, whither the forerunner has for us entered.—O God, give me a part and an interest in that great atonement made by the decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem—that the sins which I have committed may be forgiven to me.

LEVITICUS V.—The “voice of swearing” in the first verse, is by some regarded as the oath which has been laid upon a witness by the judge; and under which, if he conceal aught upon which he is examined, he is guilty of perjury. Others, however, and perhaps with greater reason, give a sense here which accords more with my first impression—that the swearing spoken of is the cursing and blasphemy uttered by another in the hearing of a witness; and whereof he is called to give an account.... In the second verse, the knowledge of that which was hidden at first

must be presupposed, as in the instances which follow, though it be not mentioned—ere the man can be held guilty . . . . The swearing in the fourth verse seems to be the swearing to do that which is unlawful though not known to be so at the time; but when it is discovered, he is involved in a dilemma between the commission of wrong or the non-performance of an oath. These cases seem all grouped together for a like expiation. Confession as well as atonement stands associated with forgiveness. The burnt-offering must have had somewhat in it of the virtue of a sin-offering—as is obvious from the expiatory power of the flour-offering for sin—distinguished from the meat-offering given to the priest out of the same flour. The oil and the frankincense, not competent for a sin-offering, were added to meat-offerings.

LEVITICUS VI. 1-7.—The trespass-offering of this chapter is distinct from that of the last in that it is for sins done knowingly, whereas the other is for sins done in ignorance. Sins done knowingly, therefore, are expiable—so that it remains to be asked what those sins done presumptuously are for which there is no expiation—such sins as those of which the Apostle speaks, when he says, (Heb. x. 26,) “If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” In this passage we may read the inefficiency of mere repentance for the pardon of the sinner without an atonement. The repentance which but grieves for sin without turning from it, is not the repentance which is unto salvation; but even the repentance which does more than sorrow, which makes restitution, is not enough for reconciliation with God. Another atonement had to be made than

that of compensation to the injured. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission; and so a sacrifice was enjoined, typical of the great Sacrifice made for the sins of the world.... I am not sure of the clause in verse sixth, "with thy estimation."

8-23.—This passage contains direction for the priests who had charge of the sacrifices. The ashes being the relit in part of sacrifices burnt on the altars, had the respect given to them that they were put in a clean place. I will not typify these.... The law of keeping up the fire upon the altar was observed most religiously by the Jews. It was first kindled from heaven, (ch. ix. 24;) and the keeping of it up perpetuated, as it were, the holy character of this its first origin. There was constant use for the fire upon this altar—as over and above all the occasional sacrifices which required it, there were a morning and an evening sacrifice every day.

We have also directions as to how the priest was to do with the meat-offerings. All that had any part of them burnt in the fire behoved to be unleavened; and the remainder was given to the priests to be eaten by them and them only, as being most holy; and eaten by them too within the court of the tabernacle. No one could even touch them who was not holy.

But beside meat-offerings for the people, there were also meat-offerings for the priests. No part of these was eaten; but all was to be burnt. The "meat-offering perpetual," half in the morning and half at night, gives the utmost verisimilitude to the account of the Jewish writers who tell us that there was a daily meat-offering for the High Priest.

24-30.—The burnt-offering is described in the first



chapter; and sin-offerings were to be burnt in the same place. The directions given here describe how the priests were to do with the sacrifices—as did the directions given before in regard to the burnt and meat-offerings. The proper burnt-offering seems all to have been burnt; but the sin-offering was eaten—not however if it was such a sin-offering as that any of the blood was sprinkled before the tabernacle and also put on the horns of the altar—for these last were wholly burnt—as for example were the offerings made for sins of ignorance on the part of the priest or of the congregation. The eating of sin-offerings by the priests signified their bearing the sins of the offerer—even as Christ absorbed and bore the penalties of sin for us all. The sin-offering was most holy; and whatever it touched, if a common thing, was either to be destroyed or to undergo a ceremonial purification—not that it was defiled by the touch, but that it could not be suffered to remain a common thing after—typical, therefore, of the enormity which there is in counting the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing.

LEVITICUS VII. 1-10.—I have not yet made out a clear distinction between the sin and the trespass-offerings. Here it is stated that there is one law for both. As being most holy it was to be eaten only by the priests or the males of their families—but as it was to be eaten in the holy place, the priest to whom it belonged must have invited them to a share of it within the court. It is to be remarked that the offerers of these sin and trespass-offerings had no share in the offerings themselves, as they had in other offerings.... Of the burnt-offerings we are here given to understand that the skin was a perquisite of the



priest—whereas in the sin-offerings, whose blood was brought to the tabernacle, the skin with all the other relicts was carried without the camp and burnt.

Poole makes a difficulty about the law of the meat-offering in verse tenth, which I think Matthew Henry satisfactorily explains. There were two kinds of meat-offerings—baken and dry. The first belonged to the priest that offered it—the second was equally divided among all the sons of Aaron who were in attendance.

11-21.—The peace-offering seems to have been of free-will; and in this respect unlike the sin-offerings. They are the voluntary acts of homage on the part of those who have already entered into reconciliation with God. It is true that the performance of vows is matter of strict and indispensable obligation; but the vows are voluntary. Directions regarding these offerings had been given before in chapter iii., as far as the sacrifice was concerned. That a sacrifice should form an essential part of these peace-offerings typifies our perpetual need of a recurrence by faith to the blood of Christ for obtaining the acceptance of our services. The directions here given respect not the sacrifice, but the meat-offering that was offered with it. The flesh of the sacrifice was to be eaten quickly—though not within the court of the tabernacle as that of the sacrifice behoved to be by the priests—for the flesh of the peace-offering might be eaten by the people in their own habitations. Perhaps the law of disposing of it quickly may explain Mark ix. 49,—salted with fire to destroy it in time—or with salt to make it savoury and good during the allowed time, if it was to be used.

22-38.—The prohibitions against the eating of fat and blood are here given at greater length than before. The

prohibition of the fat is restricted to sacrifices—and to the beasts which had died a natural death. The prohibition of the blood is more general. The offerer both heaved and waved certain prescribed parts, whether of the sacrifice or of the meat-offering—which is thus explained, the heave-offering being moved vertically, or up and down—the wave-offering being moved horizontally, or to and fro. In verse 14 we have this done with the priest's share of the meat-offering, which seems to have consisted of one of each kind of cakes and one part of the unleavened bread. The heaving and waving were unto or before the Lord; and what was thus done with, passed from the offerer to God, who prescribed the subsequent disposal of it—what was to be given to the priest and what to be burned on the altar. What went to the priests formed part of their maintenance; and as the peace-offerings were voluntary, we have here an example of clergy being supported *pro tanto* on the voluntary principle.

LEVITICUS VIII. 1-9.—This chapter details the ceremonial of consecration to the priesthood—in which Moses was the chief agent—taking the same part in the sacrifices here prescribed on behalf of Aaron and his sons—which they themselves took in sacrifices after their instalment into office. And first, he attended to the care and adornment of their persons—no obscure intimation to us that clergymen should be at least decently if not splendidly attired; and which may at least soften the puerile antipathies of those who object to robes of office, or even to such a peculiar apparel as might distinguish ministers from laymen. The making of these garments is particularly detailed in the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus. The directions here given

suppose them to have been by this time made and in readiness for putting on . . . Let the washing of Aaron and his sons remind me of the Christian salvation being by water as well as blood ; and let me ever pray for more of the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

10-17.—The same oil was applied both to the things and the persons which were made holy by it. Only what was but sprinkled on the altar was poured on Aaron, who ministered at the altar. The sacrifices made at the consecration were prescribed largely and in detail in Exodus ch. xxix. We read here of their being gone through actually. The priests themselves, unlike our Great High Priest, required an expiation for their own sins. It was Aaron and his sons who laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin-offering—transferring their own sins to the victim that was slain because of them. Let it be observed that even the altar, ere it could be fit for the offerings by which reconciliation was made, had to be purified with blood—agreeably to what the Apostle said, that almost all things are by the law purged with blood. (Hebrews ix. 22.) When the priest offered any man's burnt-offering he had the skin to himself. But when the sin-offering was for himself, it was wholly burnt, hide and all, partly on the altar and partly without the camp.

18-36.—The bullock for the sin-offering was in no part eaten by the priests—it being a sin-offering for themselves—although they ate of the sin-offerings for the people. Neither did they eat of the first ram that was slain, it being a burnt-offering. But they ate of the second ram, or ram of consecration, though for their own consecration, while they could not eat of the bullock that was slain in expiation of their own sins. They ate of the ram of consecration,

even as the people, while they could not eat of their own sin-offerings, could yet eat of their own peace-offerings. Observe the conformity between the direction given here and those given in ch. xxix. of Exodus. The basket of unleavened bread in verse 26 is that which is enjoined to be taken in verse 2, and is now spoken of as having been brought before the Lord. The oil, bread, and wafers, are not mentioned at the beginning of this chapter; but they are not omitted at the beginning of the chapter in Exodus.

LEVITICUS IX. 1-14.—Moses officiated as priest at the consecration of Aaron and his sons; but now that this was accomplished, Aaron himself enters into office, and acts as priest even with those sacrifices which are made for himself. On the eighth day when Moses called upon his brother—it was immediately after the seven days of his consecration were ended. “He ought, as for the people so also for himself, to offer for sins.” (Heb. vi. 3.) One does not know what to make of the Jewish legends. One of the most plausible among them is that Aaron was enjoined to offer a calf for himself, to remind him of his sin in the matter of the golden calf. But scripturally we know it to be a significant thing that all which was offered should be without blemish. Moses spake unto Aaron direct about the offerings for himself; but devolved it upon Aaron to speak to the people about the offerings for them. And if the guilt of the priest must first be removed ere he can make atonement for the people, should not he be personally as well as forensically righteous ere he can preach with full effect to them?

15-24.—The meat-offering of verse 16 seems to be associated with, or rather to form part of the sin-offering for

the people. At all events, the handful taken from it, verse 17, was burnt along with the daily burnt-offering of the morning, which was not suspended because of the occasional and extraordinary service that is here prescribed. Only part of the sin-offering was burnt; and what was reserved of the sacrifice, like what was reserved of the meat-offering, was probably eaten by the priests. It does not appear whether Aaron had begun the burning of all the things laid upon the altar, or laid them there to be in readiness for the fire from heaven. At all events fire did come out from before the Lord, either to burn wholly, or to hasten the burning of what had been laid upon the altar. Another miraculous manifestation was afforded to the people, who had so little profited by all the former ones. The immediate effect as usual was strong and powerful. The people were affected by the exhibition thus made to their senses; but the subsequent history proves how little it had sunk down or settled with any practical or enduring efficacy in their hearts.

LEVITICUS x. 1-7.—We are here presented with an example of the Lord's jealousy—when His officiating ministers offer to serve Him in a way otherwise than He has prescribed. The fire on the altar, kindled from heaven at the first, was never to go out; and it was with this fire only that the offerings of the law were to be burnt. But Nadab and Abihu, in neglect of this prescription, offered with other fire before the Lord; and on them was accomplished, in a fearful and striking manner, the vengeance denounced against those that would walk in the light or sparks of the fire which themselves had kindled. (Is. l. 11.) And besides, it was probably Aaron's part



alone to burn the incense (Ex. xxx. 8.)—so that along with the strange fire they may perhaps have also burnt strange incense, which is expressly forbidden. (Ex. xxx. 9.) The punishment which followed was, as interpreted by Moses, an awful demonstration of God's holiness; and his prohibition of all mourning on the part of the near relatives was an emphatic lesson of submissiveness to the up-lifted arm of an offended God. But they who were without the pale of near relationship—the children of Israel were permitted to mourn. It is very affecting to read of Aaron shutting his mouth in silent reverence, because it was the doing of the Lord.

8-20.—The prohibition of wine and strong drink laid upon the priests when they enter the tabernacle, reminds me of the precept in which there is a contrast made between drinking of wine and the being filled with the Spirit—intimating of these two influences how diverse, or rather contrary, they are to each other. This injunction is given, not as the others, through Moses, but directly to Aaron himself. Such an observance certainly gives a deeper sacredness to the work of the tabernacle, and thereby makes a stronger difference between the holy and the unholy. And they who are freest from excess in sensuality are obviously the fittest to teach.

The distinction is here kept up between the holy and the most holy. The meat-offering, of which part was burnt in the fire, behoved to be eaten without leaven, and in the court beside the altar—whereas that part of the peace-offerings which was their due, might be eaten any where else, if in a clean place.

It was only when the blood of a sin-offering was brought within the holy place that it was to be wholly burnt, and



if not it was to be eaten, but in the holy place, because it was most holy. The neglect lay in this—that they had burnt the offering instead of eating. Aaron's excuse is very affecting, and such as every man of feeling and humanity must give way to.

LEVITICUS XI. 1-8.—The distinction here established between clean and unclean meats is not new, but was recognised in antediluvian times, as in Genesis vii. 2—that is a distinction in the general, some distinction, though it may not have quadrated with what is now laid down in all particulars. There were two conditions necessary for an animal being ranked among the clean—its being cloven-footed and chewing the cud. This excluded all those which realized but one of these conditions and wanted the other; and some specimens of such animals are here given. The commandment is authoritative, whether we see the reason for it or not, but reasons are given for the ordination of this chapter; and the likeliest seems to be, that it strengthened the barrier in the way of intercommunion between the Jews and all other people—and so subserved the great purpose which God had in view when He selected and separated a peculiar family, and kept their descendants apart from the rest of the world. Observe that not only the eating of their flesh, but the very touching of the carcasses of the unclean is forbidden. The circumstance, however minute, is worthy of being noticed—that whereas in the general God spake His will for the government of Israel only to Moses, save in the last chapter, where He spake directly to Aaron—He here speaks to Moses and Aaron jointly.

9-25.—There are two conditions necessary with fishes,

even as with land quadrupeds, to rank them among the clean. They must have both fins and scales. There is no specification, as in the former case, of those which have only one of these conditions without the other. There is a still stronger stigma than that of mere uncleanness affixed to the fish which they may not eat. They were to be held as an abomination; which made the recoil from all fellowship with those who ate of them so much the more strong and sensitive.... The forbidden fowls, also, were to be held in abomination. And here follows an enumeration of particular birds which they were prohibited from eating—concluded with a general direction against all fowls that creep going upon all fours. Such in fact are flying reptiles—that is they both creep and fly. The specified exceptions are what we should denominate reptiles; but as flying reptiles may be regarded as holding an intermediate place between reptiles and insects, there was sometimes a necessity for touching the carcasses of these to remove them. Yet all who did so were held ceremonially unclean; and the oft-prescribed method of purification in which case is for the person so tainted to wash his clothes and be unclean unto the even.

26-43.—He then proceeds to enlarge on the pollution contracted by the touching of carcasses. I am not sure of the difference between dividing the hoof and being cloven-footed. I imagined these two to be identical; but here in verse 26 the case is adduced of animals dividing the hoof, yet not being cloven-footed. The uncleanness it would appear might be contracted not by persons only, but by things. This laid all the greater multiplicity of cautions and observances on the Israelites, which behoved to pervade all their domestic history, and so made it the more

impracticable to have close or intimate fellowship with any of the surrounding nations who were not proselytized. The very nicety and frequency of the exception in verse 36, &c., called for a greater attention and study on their part—giving rise to a perpetual exercise of consideration on what was and what was not the will of God. Let us not imagine, then, that in the multitude of those outward, there was no fostering and strengthening of an inward principle. It is true that mere bodily exercise profiteth not ; but here there was scope and room for men exercising themselves unto godliness.

*August, 1842.*

44-47.—Their ceremonial holiness kept them aloof and separate from all other people. By thus sanctifying themselves, they maintained that distance at which it was the purpose of God they should be kept from their neighbours round about them. It was thus that they preserved their peculiarity and secured the privilege of being peculiarly God's. The ceremonial, however, typifies the real holiness, in the enforcing of which last the Apostle Peter quotes the very words here used—"Be ye holy, for I am holy." And the ceremonial did immediately subserve the real holiness. It strengthened the principle of obedience to keep by all those minute and multiplied observations on this single principle—or on the consideration here stated, "I am the Lord your God." And it also defended the principle against besetting contaminations—for by the difference instituted between the clean and the unclean, between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten, there was a difference maintained between the Jews and the surrounding idolaters which kept them more widely apart than they else might have

been from each other. It still remains, however, an unsolved mystery—that animals should have been created, whom God has not only pronounced upon arbitrarily and ceremonially as unclean, but which naturally are the objects of our greatest loathing—such as rats and certain insects and doleful creatures, the very sight of which awakens a repugnance amounting to horror—so as to stir up not benevolence, but hatred, between one species and another.

LEVITICUS XII.—The multiplication of the occasions upon which ceremonial pollution was contracted, and a ceremonial purification had to be gone through, served all the more to widen the desired separation between Jews and Gentiles: and the more familiar, and frequent, and domestic these occasions were made, the purpose of warding off a close and intimate fellowship was all the better served. This chapter possesses the greater notoriety in that it is referred to in the Gospels on the event of the birth of our Saviour. He, though not born in sin, was made to undergo the prescriptions of the Mosaic ritual—for thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness. The woman in His instance did not conceive as other women did—yet an offering had to be made for her too, to make atonement for her. The alternative of either a lamb or a pigeon for a burnt-offering, according to the circumstances of the party, serves to mark the poverty of the earthly parents of Him who though rich, yet for our sakes became poor. They were not able to bring a lamb, and brought “a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.” The law of Moses was had respect to throughout the whole of our Saviour’s history on earth. He magnified the whole law, and made it honourable.

LEVITICUS XIII. 1.—It is a controversy whether the leprosy spoken of here is or is not the same with what is called leprosy now. The weight of authority seems to be on the negative side of this question. It is further questioned, whether it was a natural and ordinary disease at all, or not rather a special infliction in the form of a judgment by God. Certain it is, that there are recorded instances of leprosy having been inflicted because of sin; and appropriately with this, it is the priest, and not the physician who has here to do with it, whose office it was to remove ceremonial uncleanness and guilt. And it is remarkable that Christ in his dealings with lepers, is said not to cure but to cleanse them. We shall not venture a positive affirmation on this; nor deny that God might treat those as unclean who labour under physical visitations, which are referable to no voluntary transgression at all.

2-17.—Certain it is, that the diagnostics of this leprosy require the same careful examination as in other diseases. And what appeared to be likelihoods at first did sometimes disappear. Henry obtains food for his Commentary in the view that leprosy is typical of sin; and draws a number of ingenious, we might say instructive, analogies from his comparison of the two. The instruction, however, lies not in the analogies, but in the good and right things he says of sin, one of its counterpart terms—which would be equally instructive, although the *other* term were removed and kept out of sight altogether—as, for example, that there are some spots which are, and some which are not the spots of God's children, even as there are some symptoms which do not, and some which do betoken the plague of leprosy. It is worth observing, in verse sixth,



that the person who had incurred but the suspicion of leprosy, behoved to wash his clothes.

18-28.—One cannot help, on the perusal of this chapter, and more particularly of this passage, being revisited by that sense of mysteriousness which I have often felt when reflecting both on the lengthened and varied instrumentality by which God effects the designs He has in the processes of Nature. Most of the great and useful ends in creation are reached by a series of footsteps, and often by a very operose and complicated system of means. And in keeping with this, how minute and manifold are the distinctions which are often necessary to be made in order to ascertain the reality of a disease; as, in this instance, when the question of its being an actual or apparent leprosy turned on the colour of a spot or the appearance of a hair. But some say that it was not an ordinary but a miraculous disease, inflicted as a judgment for sin; and that hence it was a question of clean or unclean. This might make both the progression and the variety of symptoms all the more marvellous; yet such is my ignorance of God and of His ways, that though naturally we should not look in a judicial infliction from Him for either complication or delay, yet this consideration would not determine me in favour of this Bible leprosy being a natural disease, that had to be watched and examined diagnostically as other and common diseases.

29-46.—What follows seems to respect not a general but local or partial leprosy—the seat of which was the head or that part of the face on which the beard grows. There is the same vigilant examination directed here, as in the former case, of signs and processes.

The common occurrences of having a bald head or a



freckled skin do not of themselves infer uncleanness, and must therefore be conjoined with certain symptoms which are here described and discriminated from others ere they can be so pronounced upon . . . . The concluding verses of this passage give great countenance to the idea of a judicial infliction in the leprosy here spoken of. The solemn pronouncement of the priest that the person so affected is utterly unclean—the rending of his clothes, and the laying bare the head of the patient by his own hands—the covering upon his upper lip—the exclamation from his mouth of unclean, unclean—and, last of all, the seclusion and deep solitude to which he was confined—these liken the whole matter so much to a process and prescribed ceremonial of humiliation for guilt, that if the leprosy was not sent in consequence of sin incurred, we at least are very naturally led to look upon it as sin typified; and it were well if, under a sense of deep contrition because of the sinfulness of our soul, we joined the poor leper in his exclamation of “unclean, unclean!”

47-59.—He now passes from unclean persons to unclean things; and there is the same minute inspection and careful notation of symptoms in the examination of these as of the others. Does not this part of the observation favour the idea of a disease or plague apart from any judicial infliction because of sin—seeing that inanimates are incapable of sinning, though we are bidden by the Apostle Jude to hate the garment spotted by the flesh, to hate all which bears upon it any mark or vestige of sin. The extension of the law of leprosy to things, would seem to indicate that one purpose of the law was to prevent contagion; and perhaps this view is supported by the expression of a spreading plague in verse 57;

and for this object alone there might have been a law of seclusion ordained for leprous men or women. Still it must be kept in mind, that the management of the case was devolved on a priest, and not on a mere naturalist ; and that to inflict a taint on aught which was valuable might be for the chastisement of its proprietor.

LEVITICUS XIV. 1-9.—Now follows the process of cleansing leprosy, a process devolved likewise on the priest, as well as the prior examination of it was ; and we may now, therefore, be on the outlook for analogies with the matter of our salvation by the remedies and applications of the Gospel—even as analogies are alleged between the disease of leprosy and the great spiritual disease of sin under which we all labour. The main analogies suggested by the passage before us are, first, the necessity of a certain state in the sinner ere the atonement of Christ can tell savingly upon him. He must have faith and penitency. It was not till the leper exhibited a certain change of state that orders were given by the priest for a sacrifice. 2. The slain bird and the bird left alive and let loose, are supposed to typify—the one the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, and the other His resurrection for our justification. There is great beauty in the conception that the live bird dipt in the blood of the dead one might typify the effect of the sacrifice in giving efficacy to the pleas and intercession of the risen Saviour. The prescriptions given to him who had been leprous, after the ceremonial of the dead and living birds, might typify the requirements which lie on a believer after Christ had died for his offences and had risen again for his justification, even that he should cleanse himself from all filthiness of the

flesh and spirit, and perfect his holiness in the fear of God. Let it not be omitted, as another example of Christ's respect for the ceremonial law so long as it was in force, that he bade the lepers whom he cured show themselves to the priest, and do "according to the law."

10-20.—But we are not yet done with the sacrifices in this case of leprosy. At the end of seven days, after the ceremonial of the two birds, and during which the leper though he came into the camp had to tarry abroad out of his tent, there were other offerings that had to be made. The blood of the trespass-offering was applied to the leper in the same manner as the blood of the ram of consecration was to the priests. (Lev. viii. 23.) The parts anointed with this blood were afterwards anointed with oil; and this has been beautifully spiritualized—the one as a token of forgiveness, the other of healing. He who forgiveth our iniquities also healeth our diseases. The blood of Christ is for justification; but on whomsoever this is applied, on him also must be applied the oil of the Spirit for sanctification.... The sin-offerings and the trespass-offerings were the priest's—while the burnt-offering, as being wholly the Lord's, had in it more of the character of such a thank-offering as belonged to the peace-offering. ... Atonement was made; and the very word implies a guilt in the leper which favours the idea of its being a judicial infliction.

21-32.—There now follows an extension of the benefit to the poorer classes, who were not able to bring so costly sacrifices as those which had just been prescribed. Nevertheless they, in effect, were as thoroughly cleansed as the others—their purification being held to be equally complete and conclusive. The blood of their smaller offering,

with its accompanying oil, had the same appropriate effects upon them, and in an equal degree as upon the others. And as in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, so neither are there rich nor poor—all have the same free access to that fountain whither all might repair, and, without money and without price, draw water out of the wells of salvation. And it is precious to remark, that the graces impressed upon us by sanctification, when they receive the oil of the Spirit, are of as high account in Heaven's estimation as are those of the affluent, though in expression and material effect far beneath the offerings of their wealthier neighbours—as the widow's mite compared with the larger gifts that were cast into the treasury. The Lord Jesus Christ is no respecter of persons.

33-47.—The transition is again made from a person to a thing. It was a serious infliction on the owner when his house was visited with leprosy—and may, therefore, have been judicial. It was God, verse 34, who put the plague of leprosy in a house; and directions are given to him who owned, how he should proceed for the purification of it. The law was prospective; and could only take effect after their settlement in the land of Canaan. And yet these processes for the removal of ceremonial uncleanness look very like processes for preventing the spread of infection—more especially in the diligent examination of symptoms to ascertain whether it was leprosy or no; and then, on the discovery of its being a real fretting leprosy, in the order given for the utter destruction of the house and removal of all its materials to an unclean place. They, in the first instance, removed the parts in which the leprosy was; and if that did not suffice, but the plague con-

tinued to spread, then the house was to be altogether destroyed.

48-57.—That there should be an atonement for the house, seems to intimate that the house was smitten for the owner's sake. And the process of atonement for a leprous house was much the same with the process for a leprous person. And let me here remark, in reference to an expression used in common at the description of both processes—that of *running* water, the same word is employed for the epithet as in the New Testament, where it is translated living water, as in John iv. 10. It is water in motion as opposed to the water of stagnant pools, which soon become muddy and unwholesome. It might, therefore, apply to the water of springs which is not at rest, but affords a perpetual and fresh supply of pure water. The woman of Samaria understood our Saviour to speak of spring water—of such water as the well of Jacob afforded, but which at the time was out of reach, because they had nothing to draw with.

LEVITICUS xv. 1-13.—We have here cases, and their treatment, of uncleanness contracted in other ways than by leprosy. The uncleanness first specified might well be made the subject of judicial management—for the issue by which it is contracted seems to be that which is the effect of licentiousness. Not only is the person so affected unclean in himself; but what is touched by him or associated with him is unclean—teaching us not only to abhor the main and original evil, but to recoil from all the accompaniments which would suggest even the thought of impurity. Let us turn our eyes from beholding and our thoughts from dwelling on them—shunning every



approximation to evil, and guarding our hearts with all diligence.

14-18.—Well might uncleanness thus originated, and thus contagious, call for an atonement. It would seem that this atonement presupposed the issue having left him; and it was rendered previous to his restoration and the removal of his ceremonial uncleanness away from him.... The event of verse 16, proceeding, as it generally does, from the indulgence of a prurient and unrestrained imagination, is the fit subject of a judicial treatment.

19-33.—The circumstance of an expiation being prescribed for the uncleanness contracted by women, is in favour of leprosy not being a judicial and supernatural, but an ordinary disease.... The same cannot be said of the uncleanness that he is said to fall into whose case is stated in verse 24—for his was a voluntary act; and there seems to be intimated here, that insensibility to that which is nauseous and revolting has something of moral guilt in it, and should be treated as culpable. At all events, there seems to have been a ceremonial uncleanness which typified a moral impurity, even when it did not originate therein. The feminine affection, and probably the leprosy, too, exemplified this; and these inferred a ceremonial guilt which could only be removed by a ceremonial expiation—insomuch that if, in neglect of this, they were to approach the tabernacle, they would be held as defiling it, and be adjudged to death. An impressive representation this of the danger into which a sinner falls when he approaches God in another way than through the blood of the everlasting covenant.



LEVITICUS XVI. 1-10.—And even the High Priest himself might make an unguarded approach to the tabernacle; and so must have a ceremonial prescribed for his observance also, that he die not—typifying the august ceremonial, if it may be so called, by which we draw nigh to God in the heavens—for out of Christ He is a consuming fire, which will go forth and destroy all who presumptuously draw near in their own merits, which is tantamount to drawing near in their sins.... What is here called the holy place, is in fact the most holy—as being within the vail and before the mercy-seat. We may now have boldness to go into the holiest through the veil—(Heb. x. 19, 20)—but it is by the blood of Jesus. This was typified by the prescribed offering which Aaron had to make on the day of atonement—even as the washing of his flesh typified that sanctification which is expressed in Heb. x. 22, by “our bodies washed with pure water”.... Let it be observed that the bullock was a sin-offering specially for Aaron, that he might be prepared for entering the Holy of Holies... The goats were from the congregation and for the congregation. They both formed parts of a sin-offering, though one of them was not slain. The one bore the punishment, and so made atonement; the other bore the sins, carrying them away, and so made atonement. The punishment was laid on the one, the sins themselves on the other; and so the sinner, freed alike from the penalty and the guilt, was brought to be *at one* with God. Atonement is resolved by some into *at-one-ment*.

11-21.—The blood of Aaron’s sin-offering is brought within the vail. It was necessary that this man, compassed about with infirmities, should have something to offer. And so he offered first for himself, and then for

the people. Not so with our great High Priest, whose offering was for the people alone ; and the blood of whose offering, even His own precious blood, is of prevailing efficacy in the sanctuary of God's peculiar dwelling-place—our High Priest himself being there to plead the merits of His own atonement. . . . The holy place itself, and tabernacle, were held as unclean, and requiring an expiation because of the uncleanness of the people in the midst of whom they were placed, and so, verse 16, an atonement had to be made for them. Nay, an atonement, verse 18, had also to be made for the altar without. This was the altar of incense which was without the most holy place, and from which then the High Priest, after having made expiation there, had to “go out.” Some understand this, however, as being further out than the altar of incense—that is, out from the tabernacle altogether, or to the altar of burnt-offerings in the court. . . . The holy things, as well as the holy persons, had not only to be consecrated at first, but to undergo expiation afterwards. . . . The bullock seems to have been for himself—the goat of the sin-offering for the people—in conjunction with the holy things both within and without the vail. And it was after an end had been made of reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation, that the scapegoat was brought to have the sins of the children of Israel laid upon him, to be borne away into the wilderness.

22-34.—The scapegoat forms one of the most precious and significant types in the Old Testament. Christ hath so borne away our sins—that they are placed at as great a distance from God as the east is from the west—carried off as if to a land not inhabited, and where no more mention is made of them. Then it is that our sins might be sought

for, but not found. (Jer. 1 20.) Both Aaron, who had been engaged in the sacrifices of this great yearly atonement, and the man who led the scapegoat into the wilderness, had to wash their flesh—as if the very victims on which the sins of the people had been laid, communicated an uncleanness to those who had so nearly to do with them. The same applies to him who had to carry the victims that were slain for the yearly atonement to be wholly burnt without the camp. Their being burnt without the camp is in pursuance of the regulation of Lev. vi. 30

...The burnt-offering of verse 24, are the rams spoken of in verses third and fifth. The slain goat was a type of Christ dying for our sins: the live, of Christ risen again for our justification.

Ye shall afflict your souls, or yourselves, or you shall mortify your appetency for those objects which the soul delights in. It was a day of fasting and abstinence from sensuality—thus prefiguring the repentance that must invariably stand associated with faith in Christ's sacrifice. This great day of atonement was instituted for a perpetual observance—that is while the Mosaic economy lasted. This remembrance of sins every year is now superseded by the offering of Christ once for all. The High Priest entered the most holy place “not without blood,” (Heb. ix. 7.) Christ “by his own blood” entered into heaven for us. Even in the midst of the throne His appearance is that as of a lamb that had been slain.

LEVITICUS XVII.—This law, which restricted the killing of beasts for sacrifice, at least to the door of the tabernacle, is propounded in terms of such generality, (verse 3,) as to countenance the opinion of some that all killing of

the animals here specified for food was forbidden. At the most, this could only have applied to Israel in the wilderness; but in the land of Canaan it must have meant only the slaying for sacrifice. The alarm excited by the altar which the Reubenites and Gadites erected at Jordan, is an example of the respect held for this law. The high places of which we read so often, are examples of its violation. There seem to have been some tolerated and even sanctioned exceptions of which we read in various instances; and perhaps there was a larger allowance when the tabernacle was in the hands of enemies, or in an unsettled state, and before the building of the Temple. It was a Divine security against idolatry and corruption, thus to confine the sacrifices to one place.

The controversy about the eating of blood turns on the question, whether this was a perpetual or merely a ceremonial law. It was fit, say some, that so long as the blood of beasts was shed in sacrifice, it should not be eaten; but that these now being all superseded by the blood of Christ, the law of abstinence from the blood of animals is superseded also.

LEVITICUS XVIII. 1-10.—It would appear, from the beginning of this chapter, that the revolting practices here interdicted were frequent both in the country which the Israelites had left, and in that which they were to enter. The authority of God, however, here solemnly pronounced, will make every godly man, whatever the strength or weakness of his natural sentiments may be, to abstain from the intercourse which is so expressly assigned to be criminal and displeasing to our great Lawgiver in Heaven. ... It does not appear whether it be unlawful marriages

or unlawful lusts that form the subject of these prohibitions; but this may be safely laid down as a maxim: if the degree of relationship be so near as that a marriage would be unlawful, then indulgence with one in that relation would be incestuous.... The clause, "If a man do, he shall live in them," may be reasoned upon strictly and legally as has been done by Paul, so as to demonstrate the necessity of striking out another method for the attainment of life than by the Covenant of works. Yet has the information an important significancy and bearing and force of positive fulfilment under the Covenant of works also.

11-18.—It is remarkable that while there is an express interdict on the marriage of a man with his brother's wife, there is no such prohibition against his marriage with his wife's sister. In verse 18, the prohibition is only against marrying a wife's sister during the life of the first wife, which of itself implies a liberty to marry the sister after her death—beside implying a connivance at polygamy.

19-30.—It does not seem clear whether the passing of children through fire was an actual burning of them to death. Yet Ezekiel (xvi. 20) speaks of the Israelites having sacrificed children.... The express law of God against certain crimes from which nature is instinctively abhorrent, is like the conferring of an articulate sanction from Heaven on such instincts of shame or disgust as are felt universally. We may thus construe sexual modesty into an indication of God's will that we should be observant of this modesty in practice; and not in practice only but in thought.... It is interesting to remark the coincidence between God's will as promulgated in the written laws, and God's will as manifested in the physical or constitutional

laws of our own natures. What He calls an abomination, we separately and antecedently feel to be such. But let us not forget that the heart is the seat of all those vile affections which revolt nature—would God give us over to their power; and that without purity of heart no man shall see His face.

LEVITICUS XIX. 1-8.—This chapter may be regarded as a repetition of former laws. It is always pleasant to meet in the Old Testament with a clause or sentence referred to in the New—as “Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy”—itself a golden precept—requiring both our likeness to God and our separation from all that is opposite to His character or will.... It is interesting to observe how the duties of the first and second table are blended together in this passage—the fear of one’s parents placed before the Sabbath law and the law against idolatry—not as if there could be any superiority of obligation in things which God hath enjoined alike; for once that His will stands associated with any observances, they become equal and co-ordinate in His sight. This applies, too, to the law of the peace-offering, on which God lays such a stress that He denounces the infraction of it as an abomination and as inferring a capital punishment. The ceremonial had its purpose and plan among the ordinations of God as well as the moral law. The only difference respected their duration; for while the former lasted, it was alike binding on the people who were subjected to it.... A voluntary offering must be voluntary indeed. It should be offered cheerfully and without constraint at our own will.... Let me be impressed as if by enhancement with the repetition of the Sabbath law



9-18.—The laws both of humanity and justice, or, in the language of moralists, of imperfect and of perfect obligation, are here laid before us under one and the same sanction—the authority of God. The beautiful law of the ninth and tenth verses is enforced, as some others, but not all of them are, by God's assertion of Himself as the Lord Jehovah. There is an obvious respect to the case of the poor both in these and the thirteenth verse. Yet how admirably tempered this is in the fifteenth verse, when commiseration for them would tend to upset justice.... The law against cursing of the deaf awakens my own consciousness to the guilt of my impatience with this in others—when now I am visited with the same infirmity myself.... The retailing of adverse stories, and the witnessing against a neighbour, if innocent, of course, so as to infer the forfeiture of his life, are prohibited in verse 16.... The seventeenth verse is a most weighty injunction: Do not brood over the evils which thy brother has entailed on thee—so as to hate him in thy heart. Thou must tell him his fault; and, even though not an injury against ourselves, we should, out of a moral regard to him, in any wise rebuke him.... And further, how delightful it is to observe the full morality of the Gospel breaking forth into distinct and articulate expression, even at this early period of the world—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

19-37.—Some of these precepts accord with a finer natural feeling. Others of a more arbitrary character, are perhaps meant to widen and fortify the separation of Jews from Gentiles.... It is a curious reason for the mitigation of the penalty in verse 20, that the woman was not free. I can fancy an extenuation for the female, being a slave;

but no other extenuation for the man, than the consideration that he was not hazarding the life at least of the other party by this guilty indulgence . . . . The fact of the fourth year's fruit being holy, may signify its being all given to the priests, or perhaps eaten by themselves in some such religious way as their peace-offerings were. The fruit of the three first years of a plant may have been imperfect . . . . After the prohibition from eating blood was repeated, there follows an interdict against certain superstitious usages; and then some against a flagrant and monstrous immorality on the part of parents . . . . Let me never read the Sabbath law without an enhanced feeling of its importance and sacredness, and let me reverence the church as the place of solemn and public Sabbath observation. Then—have no religious respect to aught supernatural; but to Him who is the Lord our God . . . . The law of reverence for the old is exceedingly beautiful; and its juxtaposition to, suggests an affinity with the sentiment of fear to God . . . . And then the law of kindness and inoffensiveness to strangers is enforced by a fine appeal to the sympathies of the Israelites . . . . This important chapter concludes with injunctions on the side of equity in judgment and in dealings; and the whole is closed by a general charge of obedience.

LEVITICUS xx. 1-9.—There is repetition also in this chapter; but with expansion in regard to the first charge against the giving of seed to Molech. This would seem to imply an actual sacrifice of children to one of the heathen divinities; and the unnatural cruelty along with the idolatry of such a dreadful perpetration, carries the entire sympathy of one's heart with the punishment or—

dained against it. The positive lusting after idolatry, one can scarcely understand; but the expression employed to denote this unhallowed passion, is very frequently used in Scripture, and indicates the great force of allurements which lay in idolatry. It should be remarked that idolatry itself, or rather the worshipping and holding in religious veneration or trust any other than God Himself—even apart from the cruelty which attached to the worship of Molech, or in the turning to and whoring after familiar spirits—is denounced and threatened in terms of equal severity.—O let me be solemnized by these sacred generalities of sanctifying the Lord and keeping His statutes.

10-27.—He comes back on the charges already given against adultery and incest. The penalty laid on the former demonstrates the grievousness of it as an offence against God—it being the same with that laid on the unnatural crimes which are specified afterwards. I see in God's express estimate of the criminality of these things, a sanction given to the native antipathies of one's own heart. The sanction thus given to some of those good instincts, which are on the side of delicacy and purity, by an articulate revelation, give me augmented confidence in the guidance of other instincts or ultimate feelings, though not so sanctioned.... There are some who consider the prohibition of the seventeenth verse as directed against loose-seeing—but it implies more.... On verse 19, let me remark, that a mother's sister is not of nearer kin than a sister's daughter, nor is a father's brother of nearer kin than a brother's daughter.... There follows a general dissuasive against assimilation to other people in their abominable practices; and God's great design of separating

Israel from all other nations is used for the enforcement not of the moral only, but also of ceremonial observance.

.. Mark how holiness and separation are brought in as things of identity, or at least of close affinity to each other.

*September, 1842.*

LEVITICUS XXI. 1-15.—The regulations of this chapter have for their object to keep inviolate the sacredness and respectability of the priesthood. And their obvious moral is that still the ministers of religion should study to signalize themselves by the superior virtue and holiness of their lives. They were, first, to abstain from all such approximations to the dead as inferred uncleanness, except in the case of near relatives. The fourth verse means, that even for a chief man among the people, if dead, the priest shall not so do as other mourners, to contract uncleanness. Neither must they indulge in superstitious expressions of their grief. They must keep aloof from all that would unfit them for the services of the sanctuary; and because of which they should maintain a peculiar holiness. The same sanctity extends itself to the family of the priest, and every departure therefrom infers a severer than an ordinary punishment. The High Priest especially was signalized, not from the people only but from all other priests, in that he was not so to mourn for any—even for his parents,—as to contract a defilement in consequence. And in the selection of a wife for him there are rules laid down which serve still more to uphold the dignity of his station and family.

16-24.—We ought not to lose the spirit of these regulations now. The external dignity of the priesthood is not a subject beneath our concern, even under this more

spiritual and enlightened dispensation. There is a contempt for externals which I hold to be both unscriptural and unphilosophical. Materialism is instinct with sentiment; and there is a power of expression even in dress and drapery which makes the question of priestly vestments to be not insignificant. And certain it is, that deformity of person is still more revolting than homeliness or shabbiness of attire. I am far from advocating the establishment of any Church canon on the subject; but certainly it should be regretted that the cripple and the decrepid should be designed for the ministry—or those labouring under any such infirmity as might, from the unavoidable influence of things visible on the sentiments of men, detract from the weight and authority of the sacred office.

LEVITICUS XXII. 1-9.—The holiness of the priesthood is further enjoined and reiterated in this passage; and particular violations of that holiness are specified. Let us not imagine of these manifold literalities that they left no room for the feelings of spiritual religion, or for the exercises of any internal principle. The very multitude of these observances, by keeping the mind always on the alert, might keep in busy and perpetual play the feeling of respect for the authority of God. By supplying frequent occasions for the exercise of this sentiment, it might nourish and strengthen it the more. The great elements of sin and obedience were brought into operation on every case to which either an interdict or injunction was applied. The maxim of “to the pure all things are pure” is applicable here. One could go through all these observations with the soul of a mere drudge; but one could go

through them also with the soul of devoted loyalty to God, and so as to prove that to the spiritual all things are spiritual.

10-25.—The eating of that portion of the sacrifices which belonged to the priest was restricted to those of his own family. A mere visiter in the house, or hired servant, was not to eat of them; but it is remarkable, if instead of a servant he was a slave, or the priest's own property, he might eat. The daughter who married one not a priest could not eat of them—though, if a widow and motherless, she was restored to the privilege. There is a difference respecting the nominative which governs the word “suffer” in verse 16. It may be either that the priest shall see and not suffer the people to fall into this trespass; or that none who are thus interdicted from eating shall by their example mislead others into it.

Saving in the case of a freewill-offering, which, if given cheerfully, is accepted according to that which a man hath, there was to be no blemish in the animals offered. Even for this it was only one particular kind of blemish that was tolerated. When a man vowed, he was bound to the full extent of his promise. The sacrifices were thus the fit types of Him who was without spot and without blemish.

26-33.—Some of the directions here given are, for aught we see, arbitrary and nothing else; yet, as proceeding from the mouth of God, have an entire claim to our most reverent and religious observation. Yet may there be reasons hidden from us for injunctions which, as far as we can perceive, have in themselves no ground of reason to stand upon. Commentators go perhaps too far in the assignation of reasons—when we ought to be satisfied with the



one consideration—that, Thus saith the Lord. It is well, therefore, that at the end of a chapter, in whose precepts the authority of God seems to be the chief if not the sole ingredient, there should be the solemn and express assertion of that authority: These are my commandments, therefore shall ye do them. I have hallowed or separated you from all other people. Ye must hallow, and not profane my name by the adoption of the observances which belong to the worship of any other god. It is thus that He demands their obedience on the consideration of His supreme Godhead—to which He superadds the claim that He has upon their gratitude, by having delivered them from the land of Egypt.

LEVITICUS XXIII. 1-8.—It is well to observe, that in this enumeration of the religious feasts, the Sabbath has the precedency; and it is well, too, that it should be denominated a feast or festival—a day of rejoicing, therefore, which character it has not forfeited surely by its being a day of rejoicing in the Lord, of joy in the Holy Ghost. It is also a convocation, a day of public assembling and social worship. Then follows the feast of the passover—followed up by the feast of unleavened bread—a blessed type of the Christian life, after that reconciliation has been entered on through our acceptance of Christ our Passover. Let ours in all time coming be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. It is to be remarked of the first and last days of this feast, that, like the Sabbath, there was to be no servile work done in them—while the offerings by fire were made all the seven days. It should have been noted, that beside the holy consecration of the Sabbath, this day is spoken of as the Sabbath of the Lord in all their

dwelling—as if the household were, like the public exercises, to be of a Sabbatical character.

9-22.—A number of these observances were not obligatory on the children of Israel in the wilderness, but (verse 10) were to commence with their settlement in the land of Canaan.... I have yet to learn how the offering of the sheaf of first-fruits took place on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, as affirmed both by Poole and Henry. I cannot at present find the Scripture for this. They were prohibited from using the new corn in any form, (verse 14) till they had brought this prescribed offering unto the Lord. We are required to honour the Lord with our substance and with the first-fruits of all our increase. The offering of the first-fruits signalized the commencement, and the offering at the end of seven weeks after the finishing, of the harvest. The measuring off of these seven weeks marks the feast of Pentecost.... I feel a want of particularity in single passages, which might perhaps be repaired by the comparison of several passages. There can be no mistake, however, as to the direction wherewith this passage is beautifully concluded, respecting an offering to the poor; and, as if to blend the social more intimately with the sacred, the injunction is given with the enforcement of this assertion—that I am the Lord your God.

23-32.—The Sabbath or the first day of the seventh month is called so, because it was made a day of rest—no servile work was done therein. Various uses and purposes have been assigned for this feast. It only preceded the day of atonement by nine days; and might have served as a preparatory awakening for that most solemn of the Hebrew observances.

This day of atonement was also to be a Sabbath, or day of rest. There was both an offering and an afflicting of their souls on that day. A peculiar stress is laid upon this latter observance. Whosoever neglected it was to be cut off from the people—as if to signify the indispensable need of repentance as well as of a sacrifice, or faith in that sacrifice. “I tell you nay; except ye repent ye shall perish.” To afflict the soul is to deny its appetencies—which in part was done by abstinence from daily work—seeking not our own pleasure, and thinking not our own thoughts on that day. This affliction seems to have consisted in fasting also.

33-44.—Then follows the feast of tabernacles. The seventh month seems to have been signalized by its peculiar seasons of religious observation. The offering made by fire seven days, marks an offering to have been made on each of these days. There were holy convocations or solemn assemblies at the beginning and end of this feast, or on the first and eighth days—both of them Sabbaths, on which all servile work was proscribed. This feast of tabernacles is also called the feast of booths, verse 42. The universality of the obligation to keep this feast is more distinctly stated (verse 42) than any other feast of the seventh month. The eighth day seems to have been the greatest as it was the last day of this feast. (John vii. 37.) ... Along with the more solid branches for the construction of the tabernacles, there were more slender branches, whether for interlacing them, or for being borne in triumph at a time of rejoicing before the Lord. This was one of the most signal of the Jewish observations, and commemorative of the time when the children of Israel tabernacled in the wilderness. The ingathering which

synchronized with this feast must have differed from that which was celebrated during the feast of unleavened bread. (verse 6.) There was a vintage as well as a harvest. Let it be noted (verse 38) that these extraordinary institutions did not suspend the other and ordinary ones, as the Sabbath, nor yet our voluntary services.

LEVITICUS XXIV. 1-9.—This passage relates to the ordering of matters in that space of the tabernacle which lay between the outer and the inner vails—the holy place.... The law of continual burning is a repetition of what had been previously given in Exodus xxvii. 20, 21. The lamps were seven lamps upon one candlestick, which is called pure, (verse 4) because made of pure gold.... The expression “from the evening to the morning” probably denotes some initial operation which had to be repeated only once in twenty-four hours. Then follows the law of the shewbread, already ordained in Exodus xxv. 30. There were as many loaves as tribes. The bread was not capable of being burnt, but was eaten by the priests every Sabbath after it had been kept a week, and was removed to be replaced by new bread. It is eaten in the holy place, because, like other things so eaten, it was most holy. It is called an offering made by fire, because though the bread was not burnt, yet the frankincense laid upon it must have been—as it is called, a memorial of the whole, even as the meat-offering (ch. ii. 1, 2) is termed an offering by fire, though only part of it, a handful, with some oil and all the frankincense, was burnt for a memorial. Let it be observed that the oil (verse 2) and the bread (verse 8) were provided at the public expense—brought by or taken from the children of Israel.

10-23.—There now intervenes a little narrative—a thing of rare occurrence in the book of Leviticus. It germinates a law, however, furnishing the occasion upon which that law was promulgated. We read not only of this individual of half-blood being with the children of Israel, but of a mixed multitude having come up along with them from Egypt—(Ex. xii. 38)—some of these, perhaps, wholly Egyptians. He seems to have cursed both God and his adversary, and unprovided as they yet were with a law against the more special offence—it being different from that of taking God's name in vain—counsel was asked of the Lord regarding it. The ordination both of a penalty for this one offence, and of a general law against it, was the result of this application. Whosoever doeth as was done in this instance shall suffer the same penalty as was inflicted in this instance.

Circumcision was not made obligatory upon strangers; but it was made obligatory upon them to join in the administration of the punishment for blasphemy.

Here follows the repetition of certain other laws, not such as permitted one man to retaliate upon another in his own person, but through the medium of those judges to whom he submitted his cause. Nor yet does the law of the Gospel restrain a magistrate or public prosecutor from the punishment of those injuries which pass between man and man, however much it may prohibit individuals from deeds of retaliation. Strangers were placed under these laws.

The chapter closes with an account of the execution of the sentence passed upon the son of Shelomith.

LEVITICUS XXV. 1-7.—This passage contains the institution of the Sabbatical year, which if duly observed by

the Israelites would have secured for them the benefit of a standing miracle, and one of the most remarkable and continuous attestations for the presence and power of a living God that can well be imagined. There were thus a week and Sabbath of years as well as a week and Sabbath of days. They should neither sow nor prune in the seventh year, nor reap the spontaneous produce for laying up to appropriate, nor yet gather for the same purpose the grape of the undressed vine. These they were of course at liberty to use as their sustenance, but not to form into a stock—leaving all others not proprietors of the soil an equal chance. And not only the people, but the land also would rest under such a provision; and such is the accordance between the economies of grace and nature, that as the human frame is physically bettered by the rest of the Sabbath-day, so might the land also have been all the more productive by the rest of the seventh year. We shall meet with future examples of the religious uses to which this institution was made subservient. The very observation of this law was fitted to strengthen their pious dependence upon God, and their charity one towards another.

8-22.—The miracle was still more enhanced at the end of every seventh week of years. The seventh Sabbatical year, being the forty-ninth, was followed by the year of Jubilee or the fiftieth year, during which, as well as the preceding year, they had to live mainly on the produce of the sixth year that preceded them both, and which year was to be so prolific, by God's special blessing, as to bring forth fruit for three years. It should be remarked, however, that there subsists a controversy whether the year of the jubilee was not the forty-ninth, though by a



Hebraism termed the fiftieth year. The jubilee commenced with great fitness on the day of atonement.... No sale could be made that would permanently alienate the subject from its owner. It must return to him on the year of jubilee. The price of course varied with the interval between and the jubilee. There was a limit thus set to oppression; and, as if by a law of entail, the property behoved ever to remain, save with brief intermissions, in the family to which it belonged.

23-28.—“The land shall not be sold for ever”—it shall not be alienated from the families to whom I have allotted it. For the land is mine, saith the Lord. It was in fulfilment of my design that I gave it to the people whom I had selected, and distributed it among their tribes and families—and that not to be owned but occupied by them as tenants at will, who on my account are but strangers and temporary sojourners thereupon, not having the power therefore to dispose of their holdings any more than a tenant has the power of selling his farm. The jubilee was a grand expedient for keeping the land fixed in the same families, while, at the same time, it allowed a freer use to the holders than that of the mere annual fruits of the soil. They could not sell it for its whole value so as to part with it for ever, but they could sell the value of as many years' fruits as stood between them and the jubilee, with a power at the same time of redeeming, at a price of course greater or less, according to the length of time from the jubilee.

29-38.—But the protection of the jubilee is not granted to houses in walled towns. These might be purchased by men who had the wealth, for the mere object of a secure dwelling-place, and though their lands were elsewhere

situated. Whereas, generally speaking, the houses of villages may have been even near the lands of their proprietors, and so were treated as part and parcel of these. The houses of the Levites, however, had the entire protection of the law of jubilee—wherever they were situated. And it would appear as if the fields of the Levites could not be sold at all—that is, could not be alienated from the support of the ministry for any number of years, however small. These fields belonged to Levites, not as persons or families, but to Levites as a body.... The undoubted duty of relieving the poor is here laid down. Whatever our opinion may be as to the wisdom or expediency of a legal provision for them, let us not blink the obligation which lies upon us in conscience and duty of assisting them in their necessities.... There is no general ordination here against taking interest upon loans—it is only against taking interest from *the poor*. It is an order to lend charitably as well as to give charitably. When the money is borrowed for the purposes of trade—then the borrower does not fall under the description of poor—and it is but fair that the lender should share in the profits along with him. At the same time, in Deut. xxiii. 19, the ordination is general; and, to vindicate the modern practice of taking interest upon loans, it might be said that when the Israelites of that time, who were not a trading people, borrowed, it was for present relief—whereas the strangers were more commercial in their doings, and it was allowed to take interest from them.

39-55.—A servant from among the Hebrews might be bound to the year of jubilee; but then his kind of service was not to be as that of a bondman; or, in other words, he should not be made to serve with rigour. At the same

time there is an Old Testament sanction for the state of slavery. The heathen and strangers might be bought as slaves for ever, and be compelled to serve with a rigour which it was not allowed to exact from a Hebrew servant. And if a Hebrew should be sold to a stranger who sojourned within the land and was therefore amenable to its laws, he was redeemed either by his relatives or by himself, and, what was more, the servitude behoved to expire at the next jubilee. It is thus that the redemption-price was regulated, according to the number of years from the termination of the period. Besides, a Hebrew servant under the rule of a stranger or proselyte, was not to be ruled over with rigour. It is said "in thy sight"—that is, in the sight of the magistrate whose duty it was to redress the injury, or in the sight of any Hebrew observer whose duty it was to make it known and complain to the magistrate. The reason given by God for this law, even that they were His servants, intimates the care He has of His own, the special property He claims in them, the interest He feels, insomuch as not to suffer that others shall hurt or misuse them. You are not to lay any other burden than I choose on those whom I consider as my own servants.

LEVITICUS XXVI. 1-13.—There is here a singling out of two commandments for repetition, followed up by a general charge of obedience. The one marks God's abhorrence of image-worship—the other the sanctity which He claims for His Sabbaths; and let the selection here of this one observance confirm still more my respect for the Sabbath, and deepen my sense of its obligation. Let me add to this a special and solemn reverence for the house of

public assembly, and for all its services . . . . I like the free and unembarrassed manner in which Scripture makes the Divine blessing turn so directly on the obedience of the people. The orthodoxy of Scripture lays no incumbrance upon this. And yet the foundation of acceptance is the same in all ages—even the righteousness of Christ, that righteousness unto death which was prefigured by the sacrifices of the law. But we are told not to be constantly laying at this foundation—rather to presuppose it, and instantly proceed upon it, going forth unto perfection in all the works and graces of our required obedience. The walking in God's statutes, and keeping His commandments, and doing them—form one part of the covenant in which if we fail, we shall be accursed, but which if we fulfil, we shall inherit the promised blessing . . . . Let it be remarked how often God reiterates this claim on the services of the children of Israel, that He had brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, the land of their bondage. And He has brought us out of bondage also—He has loosed the bands, both of our guilt and our corruption; and let it be our language, as it was that of the psalmist—"I am thy servant; I am thy servant." (Ps. cxvi. 16.)

14-20.—There now begins the alternative for disobedience; and altogether we have set before us a clear discipline of rewards and punishments, under which the children of Israel prospered when they walked in the way of God's commandments, and were plunged in all sorts of adversity when they transgressed them. The whole history of their nation is the history of such a discipline. By not doing the commandments of God, they broke His covenant—though they were under a covenant of works;

and our systematic is a perversion of the true Scriptural theology, if we do not readily coalesce with such a representation. . . . There is here laid before us a series of judgments, rising the one above the other, if the children of Israel would not be exhorted by their first and earliest chastisements, but persevere in their iniquity. The very first threatening, however, brings the terrors both of disease and invasion before them. There is then superadded the threatening of a still more entire subjugation—"I will break the pride of your power"—over and above which the horrors of famine are set before them. The rains of heaven should be withheld, so that all the labour they spent on the culture of their fields would be vain and unfruitful.

21-39.—The climax is carried forward in this passage. At the next stage of their obstinate and continued rebellion, their land was to be overrun with wild beasts; which should destroy the cattle, and even reduce the population so as to make them palpably few in numbers. If they still persisted in their hardihood, then, over and above more desolating wars and conquests and famine than before, they were to be visited with pestilence. And, finally, if they still walked contrary unto God, His fearful judgments were to be carried to their acme and their highest consummation—the famine to be so aggravated as that they should eat the flesh of their own children, the destruction of their sanctuaries and cities, the possession of their land by invaders, and their own captivity and dispersion in distant lands. The country would be brought to desolation, and those Sabbatical years which had been violated should be made up for in the depopulation and stillness of that period when the land was bereft



of her population—a threatening this, which, according to Jeremiah, had its remarkable fulfilment at the time of the Babylonish captivity. And, furthermore, their state when in captivity is here graphically depicted, and in a way which has been verified by their history for many centuries from the destruction of Jerusalem.

40-46.—Then follows what God will do with them should they repent. He will pity and restore them. There has been no adequate fulfilment either of this promise or of the condition on which it rests. The Babylonish captivity and return from it do not nearly fill up those prophecies which point out a general return of the children of Israel from all countries, and a secure establishment of them in their own land.... The exhibition of the Divine character in its placability and long-suffering is truly precious and encouraging. Let it not encourage us to sin, but to renew the covenant we have broken with our God—casting ourselves anew on Him whose goodness should lead to repentance, and who will heal our grievous backslidings.... What a noble range of history will be presented to us, when we are enabled to connect the first covenant with Abraham with that great modern, and indeed yet future movement, of the re-establishment of the Jews in Palestine!

LEVITICUS XXVII. 1-8.—These singular vows were of course the free and spontaneous forth-putting of a religious inclination on the part of those who made them. *Singular* would appear here to be in the sense of *extraordinary*, and it may be such a vow as denotes either oneself or a something which he owes unto the Lord. When a man thus dedicated himself or any of his family to the



Lord, then—as he could not be accepted in sacrifice, and as he was not needed in the way of menial servitude—there was fixed for him an estimation in money, and this was sustained as an acquittal of his vow. In this passage the rates of estimation are prescribed, varying with the sex and the age of the person ; and there was a mitigation of the same at the discretion of the priest, if the person happened to be poor. By this law a channel was opened up for those pecuniary contributions which would prove available and useful for the reparation of things sacred and the services of the sanctuary. It provided an outlet for the religious zeal of the people, and such a one as ought mightily to be encouraged and made use of in these days.

9-21.—He now proceeds to those cases where the thing vowed instead of a person is a property. If the beast vowed be clean, and so fit for sacrifice, it was not to be redeemed, or if not fit for sacrifice, because of any blemish, it was still to be holy, and given to a sacred use, such as the maintenance of the priest. He must not vacillate from his purpose and vow ; or if he do, changing one beast for another which he would prefer for the sacrifice, then, as if to check this variableness, both must be esteemed holy and alike irrecoverable for common use. An unclean beast, though unfit for meat, might be fit for use. If such was used, it became the priest's, or was used for the service of the sanctuary. But if the man chose to redeem it he might have it back at the priest's valuation, and a fifth part more, which seems to have been added as a check on the mutability of our purposes in things sacred. In like manner, if he sanctified a house—mark how to sanctify is synonymous with to set apart—the priest's estimate of

the value of the house was to stand, that is, according to his estimation; if he sell it, it must be sold, when, of course, the price went into the sacred treasury. But if redeemed by or sold back to the person who had vowed it, he behoved to add a fifth part, as a restraint, it is probable, upon his fluctuations.... What is said within this passage is of inherited not purchased land. It seems to have been a competent thing for the owner to redeem the field by paying a fifth more than the valuation, so as to get it back at the year of jubilee. But if he will not redeem the field, or if it be sold to another man, (which could be done only by the priest at his own valuation of the price till the year of jubilee,) then at the jubilee it reverted to the priests as their inalienable possession. Let it be observed, that of this family possession only a part could be thus alienated, that as much might be reserved as would suffice for the owner's maintenance.

22-34.—Not so with the fields that are bought. They might be in whole or in part disposed of to the priest, but only till the year of jubilee—seeing that the buyer could only purchase them on to that period, as they behoved then to return to their original possessor. It does not appear, however, that the land, but only the estimated value of the land, was made over to the priest.... The firstlings were not to be sanctified by any freewill or singular vow—for these were absolutely the Lord's by a general law. They that were not sacrificed might be sold at the priest's estimation, or if redeemed by those to whom their parents belonged, they were to add a fifth part.... To devote was a peculiar kind of consecration, different from that of mere sanctifying. It cannot be redeemed. It must be put to death. Even devoted persons were thus fated; only it

was not competent for any so to devote his fellows. When done, it must be of the Divine authority, as when nations were doomed to extermination.... Then follows the general law of tithe—redeemable, not as now by a process of subtraction, but of addition. The tithe-payer must not select, whether for good or bad. He must take it as it comes. Also, if he will give the priest a something for a substitute in place of that which had been already marked for tithe—then both the original and its substitute should forthwith be held as the Lord's; and neither should be redeemed.... The Book concludes with a brief statement of its own contents—as a record of the commandments which God delivered to Moses in mount Sinai.

### NUMBERS.

NUMBERS I. 1-16.—The Book is so called from the frequent lists and enumerations which occur therein. The transactions which took place from the Exodus of Israel till the time of making the summation which is here recorded, occupied little more than a year—a year and a month.... One does not know the exact principle on which the chief men were determined. There are various instances of respect being had to primogeniture—yet this was far from being universal.... The enumeration here spoken of was restricted to those fit for war, and from which they could obtain a view of their military strength. There were to be with Moses one man for every tribe, as their representative, forming, it is probable, his council of war. They were to be with Moses, and to stand with Moses—each the head of the house of his fathers; whether selected as previously head of the whole tribe, or

constituted head because so selected on other grounds, this passage does not inform us. Or, perhaps, they were appointed only for the purpose of managing this census of the people.

17-23.—It is a general habit of Scripture to specialize by the further addition of his father's name to his own. This is frequent in all nations; and hence the Macs of Scotland, the Aps of Wales, and the O's and Fitz's of Ireland, and the final syllable of son in the surnames of England. Among the people of Israel this was more peculiarly observed, not from the general motive of commemoration, but from the concern they had in descents and genealogies . . . . It now appears that these twelve men were fixed upon for the work of prosecuting this survey. (verses 17 and 18.) They are said to be the renowned of the congregation—for what? Whether from their birth or their character and talents? Were they princes or heads because of the place they held among the families, or because of their own merits? Whether did they compose an aristocracy of birth or an aristocracy of talent? . . . . The enumeration was begun (verse 18) on the day that the order was given.

24-39.—Let it be observed, from this chapter, that there seems to be no absolute guilt in numbering the people, though David incurred a great displeasure by it. Here, however, it was done by appointment—there, without an appointment; in the one case bidden, in the other unbidden, if not forbidden. Henry speaks of their being numbered before, from Exodus xxxviii. 25, 26, and remarks on the perfect coincidence of the two distinct censuses. But, may it not have been but one census, even the present one? and we have only to suppose that the levy, though

begun and proceeded with, was not completed till after the enumeration was finished. They were numbered, it is said, by their generations—a more comprehensive term than the future ones which are employed. Perhaps it is synonymous with tribes. At all events, the enumeration began with the tribes; and if generations were subordinate to these, they were more comprehensive and generic than the families and than the individuals. The names seem related to the families, and the families to the generations, and perhaps the generations to the tribes as a species stands related to a genus.

*October, 1842.*

40-46.—Of all these tribes that of Judah was the most numerous, even more numerous than those of Ephraim and Manasseh put together—or, in other words, the descendants of Judah, the ancestor of one tribe, were more numerous than all the descendants of Joseph, though the ancestor of two tribes.... We may here observe the inferiority of the tribe of Manasseh to that of Ephraim, in conformity with the prophetic blessing of their grandfather Jacob. We doubt not, however, that the principles of Malthus were fully exemplified among the tribes of Israel, as they were and will be all the world over. They would be more or less populous according to the productiveness of the respective territories that were assigned to them. We doubt not, for example, that the tribe of Benjamin, reduced to a small remnant, would speedily recover themselves under the unfading energy of the principle of population. The tribe of Manasseh was the least numerous; whereas the tribe of Benjamin, though it had one generation more to multiply in, was less numerous than that of Ephraim.



47-54.—The Levites were not numbered, as they were exempted from war, and the present was a military census. They had other things to mind; and it is a strong scriptural testimony to the magnitude and importance of ecclesiastical work, that one tribe out of twelve was not thought too large a proportion of the people for doing it aright, and discharging all the attentions and labours in things ecclesiastical which were required for the good of the nation and the glory of God. Such was the sacredness of the priestly office, and of the priestly things about which they had to do, that no stranger—that is none who were not of the tribe of Levi—could come nigh but under the penalty of death; and therefore the Levites encamped round the tabernacle, lest wrath should come on the congregation by any of those approaching too nearly. The service of the tabernacle seems not enough to have occupied a whole tribe; and this of itself is a presumption for their having been extensively employed for other uses and in other services. They were the teachers of the law throughout Israel, and the great body of their literati, we doubt not, was composed of these ecclesiastical men.

NUMBERS II. 1-9.—After the numbering of the tribes, we have now the marshalling of them in military order, or in the order of their march. There is a distinct reason for the statement of each tribe specifically and individually—as the object was the assignation of their places—each belonging to a certain division, and each forming a certain part and occupying a certain locality in that division. Judah was placed at the head of a camp made up of three tribes, and rallying under one standard, called the standard of Judah. They were placed on the east side of



the whole, and it is said they were to be the first who should set forward. The movement was, on the whole, an orderly one. It is to be remarked that though Judah's tribe was the most numerous, yet the other two therewith associated were numerous also, each being above the average, and so making this camp far the strongest of them all, so as greatly to strengthen the van of the whole army. Let it be remarked, that they were to pitch far off from the tabernacle—keeping a reverent distance therefrom.

10-24.—From this passage it would appear that the order of the encampment is different from the order of the march. When they pitched, it was round about the tabernacle, which was placed in the midst of the four divisions, or the centre of the whole army. When they journeyed, it was in the order of procession laid down throughout this chapter—that is, the standard of Judah first, then of Reuben, then of Ephraim, and lastly of Dan. The tribes probably moved, too, in the order of their enumeration—as the tribe of Issachar, which pitched next to that of Judah, moved, it is likely, next to or immediately after Judah. It is worthy of remark that the second and third division were nearly of equal number to each other, while the least numerous of the four—as if the protection of the whole could be best secured by the weaker parts being put between the stronger extremities.

25-34.—It might have been observed before that the men appointed to conduct the census were also made the captains of their respective tribes—and the presumption therefore is, that their renown and their chieftainship and their princely dignity (ch. i. 16) were founded on personal accomplishments, or that these at least had a share in the appointment of them. It is well, however, that both the

order of precedence and the captains (ch. i. 5) were appointed of God—thus saving all the jealousies of a human appointment or authority . . . Henry assigns a principle of distribution in the relationship which the different patriarchs or members of Jacob's family held to each other. Dan's squadron was the next in force to Judah's, so as to furnish a strong rear as well as a strong van. Well might Balaam exclaim, as he looked on this magnificent and orderly encampment, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!"

NUMBERS III. 1-4.—The strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu is a fertile and legitimate topic of spiritual accommodation—grounded on the general principle, that every plant which the Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. We must not walk in sparks of our own kindling, but serve God both in a light and a heat that have come down from Heaven—not with the fire of earthly passion of any sort, but with a fire of God's own kindling. We must serve Him with His own—not with the wisdom which is from beneath, but with the wisdom which is from above. We are apt to confound the natural with the spiritual—that fire which is the product of our own sensibilities with that fire which comes upon us by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Heavenly Father, impart to us the genuinely good and perfect gifts that come from above, and let me not be deceived by the counterfeits of natural feeling and natural virtue. We ask what is of sterling quality at Thy hand, and Thou wilt not give us a stone for a loaf, or a serpent instead of a fish.

5-13.—The Levites were to God in place of the first-born of the families of Israel who were redeemed by the consecration of this tribe to holy services. They were subor-

dinate to the priests; but various ecclesiastical offices were assigned to them. I can never cease to regard the allotment of such a portion of the population to ecclesiastical work as a most impressive argument for a far greater number of church functionaries than are at present employed by us, and as conveying a most emphatic rebuke on the stinted and parsimonious establishments of modern times. A beneficial employment could be assigned to them all as preachers, as educationists, and as professional men of all sorts who had to do with the mind and morals of the nation. It is ridiculous to speak of their expensiveness—for wherein do they differ from mere proprietors of the soil but in this—that they do something in return for their maintenance—the others nothing, at least nothing in the way of legal or official obligation?

14-26.—The Levites also were numbered, but by themselves, and not in the general enumeration, or for the purposes of war. And let it be remarked, that they were numbered not from twenty years old as the others, but from a month old and upwards. They were divided into three classes, according to their three progenitors, the sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath and Merari; and subdivided by their immediate descendants as the Gershonites into Libnites and Shimites. The station of the Gershonites was at the west side of the tabernacle and near to it, as the Levites in general were all round. The chief of the Gershonites seems to owe his place to an immediate Divine appointment, instead of owing it to his birth. It is well that there should be such orderly distribution both of rites and of services—and so as that each should know both their own station and their own work.

27-39.—The Levites, it is to be remarked, were subordinate to and the servants of the priests; and thus the descendants of Moses were of inferior station to those of Aaron. "Hence it may be," says good Matthew Henry, "that though Moses is generally put before Aaron when they are named together—yet at the beginning of this chapter Aaron is put before Moses."... In regard to the kind of services allotted to the three classes, the more dignified of the employments was assigned to the Kohathites, though descendants only of the second son. They too had the honour of the priests being of the same family with themselves. The next in honour, if we may judge from their appointed services, were the Gershonites, or eldest branch of the tribe. To the Merarites were given the charge and carriage of the coarser and heavier materials of the tabernacle.

40-51.—Here we have the consecration of all the first-born to God as His property, as also the firstlings of the cattle—instead of which last the cattle of the Levites were taken whose persons and property were devoted. For the first-born males of the families of Israel the Levites themselves were taken, who formed a peculiar nation and holy priesthood unto the Lord. But were not all the first-born of the cattle given to the Lord by sacrifice; and how is it that, over and above this, the Levites' cattle were considered as a substitute for the firstlings of the general cattle? The small excess of the general over the Levitical first-born was redeemed by money. It is remarkable that this excess was so small. The number of first-born males among the children of Israel bears a vastly smaller proportion to the number of first-born males among the Levites, than the number of all the males above twenty

among the twelve tribes does to the whole number of the tribe of Levi.

NUMBERS IV. 1-16.—The Kohathites, who were of the same class or division of the tribe with Aaron and the priests, had that duty assigned to them on the march of the children of Israel, which corresponded with the charge that had been specially made theirs of the inner parts of the tabernacle. To Aaron and his sons, however, who were priests, belonged exclusively the office of covering the sanctuary and all the vessels of the sanctuary; and it was not till this had been done that the Kohathites were to come forward, and to bear, as Levites, what the others, as priests, could alone see, and whose part it was to cover them up from the sight of others. They behoved to handle these sacred utensils in the act of covering them—after which the Kohathites could but touch the covering, and not the things covered. There is instruction to be drawn from the time of life within which these services were to be performed—between 30 and 50. How does this comport with the incessant call for service, in these days, from ministers of far greater age?

17-20.—In this brief passage there is another impressive view held forth of the Divine holiness—fitted to beget an awful reverence of God. The Kohathites must not even see the holy things as they were being covered. They must keep their solemn and respectful distance till they were shut up from their view. Let this impress the lesson of our distance by nature from God, and our need of a Saviour by whom to be brought nigh. The duty here prescribed applied to the lifting and carrying forward of the tabernacle, during the progresses of the children of Israel. The

charge which the Kohathites had of the sanctuary and its things, of course implied other duties at the time when the people abode in their camp . . . . The coverings were for a fence as well as a concealment ; and it is worthy of being noted that the outer coverings were such as to prove that ornament and decency were also consulted.

21-33.—They to whom the service of transporting the tabernacle was assigned were they who did the ordinary work of the tabernacle when encamped ; and as these were only those who were between the ages of thirty and fifty, this forms a striking demonstration of the importance of the prime of life being given to all the more toilsome work of the ministry. The things which each of these classes had to carry were the things which they usually intromitted with in their ordinary service. “ The charge of their burden was according to all their service ”—that is, what they served with in their usual ministry, that they had to take the charge of also in the progresses of the children of Israel. And so the Gershonites had to do with what may be termed the upholstery of the tabernacle chiefly, while the Merarites had to do with its boards and pillars and solid materials.

34-49.—This is a different numbering from that which is recorded in the third chapter—when all the males were numbered from a month old and upwards. Here we are presented with the number of serviceable men in the three classes of Levites ; and I again repeat the interest and satisfaction which I feel in the term of serviceableness being limited within the ages of thirty and fifty.—O my God, if it be Thy blessed will, allow me an old age of piety and peace. Save me from the fatigue and discomfort of those harassing controversies. But yet if Thou



willest otherwise, prepare me for that will. Give me to love Thy law and Thy way, and then nothing shall offend. Enable me to do all in Thy spirit, and not in my own. Let me not be too much annoyed by the perversity of those constant misunderstandings on the part of my fellows to which I am exposed; and, doing whatever I am called with more of patience and less of perturbation than I have done hitherto, in that patience may I possess my soul.... It were well to ascertain how far the numbers between thirty and fifty bear that proportion to the numbers from one month old and upwards which the statistical tables and calculations of lives founded thereon would lead us to anticipate. We might thus, perhaps, arrive at a confirmatory evidence for the truth of the narration.... Let it be observed, that in verse 47 the service of the ministry and the service of the burden are set forth as distinct services.

NUMBERS v. 1-10.—Let us notice the strict and jealous guardianship that was kept up against all ceremonial uncleanness—the type therefore of that vigilance and care which should be practised by us in the maintenance of holiness, or in cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Let us be diligent to be found of God without spot and altogether blameless. The rules observed for the purity of the camp suggest also the rules which should be observed for the purity of the Church, and the faithfulness wherewith they should be put into execution. Let there be nothing to offend in all thy Holy Mountain.

It seems evident that the offence spoken of in verse 6, was an offence against the property of a neighbour—

called also here a trespass against the Lord. There must in this case, be confession and restitution and atonement. The restitution no more supersedes this than repentance in general supersedes our dependence on the great Sacrifice. It seems a natural enough way of explaining verse 8 to suppose that the man trespassed against was dead, and had no kinsman, in which case the offender was not to go free, but to render the required satisfaction to the priest. What was given to him, either in this way or in other ways as by a freewill-offering, was his irrevocably.

11-15.—At the outset of this passage the supposition is made of the absolute truth of the woman's adultery. It is evident, however, that the trial proceeds on the suspicion and not the truth of this offence—for the result might be her innocence. It warrants a trial simply if the man be visited with jealousy, which he ought not to feel on slight grounds, and which she again should take all pains not to incur, by avoiding every appearance of evil. It is clear that the man's jealousy, whether groundless or not, is regarded as sufficient warrant for a trial. Oil and frankincense were proscribed on this occasion. These were used at peace-offerings or thank-offerings, or such other joyful occasions, but were not suitable at a time of bitter mental suffering, and when iniquity was present to the mind as an object of agonizing suspicion. The deference here rendered to the feeling of jealousy, proves the sin and evil nature of the offence by which it is excited.

16-31.—The whole of this process speaks impressively to the evil of adultery, and how heinous an offence it is regarded in the eye of the Divine law.—My God, save

me from even the embryo waywardness that, in the sight of a holy and heart-searching Lawgiver, is looked upon as having in it the guilt of this foul enormity. The Mosaic was in many respects a miraculous dispensation—as in the Sabbatical year, and also in this particular observance. In verse 23, the process seems to be, that the curse which was written, by being blotted in the water, should impregnate the water with its ink, and be as it were the proximate cause of the cursing. The water with dust in it, and the writing materials of the curse, had no natural tendency to produce the effects it did on the woman when guilty. There was a special interposition of God in it.

NUMBERS VI. 1-12.—A Nazarite signifies one who is separated—as Joseph, in Gen. xlix. 26. And so, previous to the law here described, it may have signified one signalized by his religion among men. There is an express legal ordination made in regard to such, so as to form them into a regular caste; and in this enactment we observe a sanction given to such observances as are fitted to distinguish from the world those who aspire to superior and extraordinary degrees of sanctity. Some were Nazarites for life, but the law here respects those who engage to be Nazarites for a given period. The abstinence from wine, and other observances of an external sort, did not, it is to be presumed, form the whole peculiarity of this order; and the likelihood is, that the men of this description who separated themselves unto the Lord, gave Him a spiritual as well as an outward service; and that many of them, distinguished by vital godliness, gave themselves to the works and the manifestations of piety.

13-27.—There is atonement made for the defilement contracted by the Nazarites, although it was made up for by the period of consecration beginning anew from the time of the defilement, and the full period of the separation being afterwards to be completed—and the example of restitution not being accepted without a sacrifice. Neither did the fulfilment of his period suspend the necessity of a sin-offering at the close of it. Sin mixes with our best and holiest services; and at all times do we need, for peace to our consciences, to have the blood of sprinkling applied to them.

What a beautiful and affecting conclusion have we in this chapter! O may this blessing be realized on me and mine! What a forthgoing of spontaneous affection on the part of God to His own! My Father in heaven, thus bless me, and rejoice over me for good. Keep me from evil. Cause Thy face to shine on me, and be gracious unto me. Manifest Thyself unto me: and let me behold Thy reconciled countenance, so as to have peace. O may Thy name be put in me, and not a name to live while I am dead; but let me have the power as well as the form of godliness.

NUMBERS VII. 1-3.—We might easily imagine the impression which the completion of the tabernacle and its setting up would have on the children of Israel. In particular, it opened the hearts of the princes whose offerings were voluntary yet equal, under a feeling of the suitability of this, in which all must have acquiesced. There must have been concert and arrangement amongst them—the partnership, as it were, of a joint and agreed-to movement. They two and two gave a wagon for each pair, and an ox a-piece—a necessary appurtenance to the taber-

nacle for its removal from place to place. It is said that the princes of the tribes who were over them that numbered were the offerers; and, accordingly, on comparing the names, it will be found that they are the same with those enumerated in chapters i. and ii. All in or about the tabernacle, as set up by Moses, was according to the pattern showed him in the mount. But there was no prescription then of the things now brought for the tabernacle by the princes of their own freewill, however convenient these things were for its service. It is thus that God leaves His own express directions to be supplemented by the discretion of men under the guidance of wisdom and piety.

4, 5.—And God acknowledges these freewill-offerings; and descends to give a special charge respecting them. This is a Divine testimony in favour of voluntaryism, though not as an exclusive principle. He directs Moses to take the wagons and oxen which had been brought before the tabernacle, and put them to its service. It is altogether worthy of remark, both in regard to this and all the other offerings, that there was no such ordination respecting them as the other things whereof Moses had a pattern shown to him on the mount. This might be brought to bear with decisive effect on the objections of those who would refuse all that had no express Scripture for it, respecting the details of church service and church accommodation. There is a great deal left to human regulation—appendages of undoubted convenience, and which it were as absurd to resist on this ground as to protest against the ringing of the people to Divine service, because there is no Scripture for a church-bell. There is undeniable use for many things not previously enjoined;

though God in this instance so far honours the spontaneous offerings of the princes as to direct what use they were to be put to, though probably but sanctioning the very purpose for which the things offered were designed by themselves.

6-9.—The wagons and oxen were made over to the Levites for their respective services—in the transportation of the tabernacle. The Merarites had a doubly greater amount assigned to them than the Gershonites; and for this good reason, that their special charge included all those bulkier and heavier parts of the tabernacle, which would require a greater amount of carriage for them when passing from place to place—the Gershonites, as I said before, having chiefly to do with the lighter upholstery of the tabernacle, which could be put up in wrappings, and made to occupy little room; whereas the Merarites had to do with its more unmanageable carpentry, its boards and bars and pillars. The Kohathites again, had no wagons or oxen assigned to them—they having to do with the furniture of the sanctuary, or Holy of Holies, which had the special honour put upon them of being borne on men's shoulders. The different parts of Scripture will be found to hang well together, and the more we examine it, the more shall we discover of that consistency which is the index of truth.

10, 11.—As the great and wealthy on the present occasion were the benefactors of the community in things ecclesiastical, so ought they still with their gifts and endowments. In the present state of our own Church they stand aloof from us, and we are forced to shift our applications from the higher classes to the bulk of our common people.—O my God, may I receive direction



and encouragement from Thee, in the absence of all countenance from my fellows. I pray, O God, that I may not faint and be weary in my mind. Enable me, O God, to pass a wise sentence and deliver an upright testimony, on every subject that comes before me—and more especially in all that concerns the good of religion in these lands. If it be Thy blessed will, enable me to compensate for the desertion of the rich and the powerful by effectually calling forth the offerings of the general population, and chiefly those of Thine own devoted servants in the religious public of Scotland.... Let it be observed, that there was a special day for each prince's offering.

12-83.—These offerings were so costly, that it is thought by many that they must have been the products of the general offerings of each tribe. This is very possible. The names of the different princes, so far as I have examined them, are coincident with those given in former chapters. It is obvious, that while some of these offerings were for the religious service of the day—as the animals for sacrifices—others of them were to serve as the permanent furniture and utensils for the use of the ritual in all time coming; and though but one altar is here spoken of, yet, as the spoons seem more for the use of the altar of incense, it would appear that the presentations here spoken of had respect to both altars. The spoons, it is said, were to be full of incense—whereas the charger and the bowl were full of flour for the meat-offering, the service of which was connected with the altar of burnt-offerings.

84.—After the detailed recital of the respective offerings, the inspired penman proceeds to give a summation of the whole. One might imagine that a summary description would have served, and that so the repetition of

the offerings of each prince might have been spared ; and yet we cannot doubt that, in the construction of the Sacred Volume, there was a perfect and a presiding wisdom ; and, therefore, that the repetitions of this chapter are not vain repetitions. Perhaps the reason is a good one, that an equal honour and equal recognition might be given to each tribe ; and that on the same principle as a separate day was assigned for the execution of each, instead of all being done on the same day—so a separate paragraph was assigned for the recording of each, instead of all being comprehended in one paragraph. We know the veneration in which their sacred writings were held by the Hebrews, and so the honour which would be felt by each tribe to redound to themselves particularly, by the full reckoning and acknowledgment made in Scripture of their contributions to the service of the altar at the time of its solemn dedication. There is a similar repetition of identities in Rev. vii. 5, where what generically and comprehensively could have been expressed in one sentence, is spread out into twelve sentences. But even though no explanation could be found, we should not on that account give up the optimism of the Bible.

85-88.—Here the summation of the whole is fully rendered. It was a result made up of separate items—the very way in which I should like great results come at for the service and good of religion at the present day. It is truly grievous that great things should be attempted in any other way ; and still more so, that when proposed in this way they should stand charged with Utopianism. There is nothing preternaturally gigantic in any of the separate contributions ; and nothing surely can be less imaginative or more perceivable than the plain arithmetic

by which you arrive at your reckoning of the sum-total. It requires no magic or feat of necromancy to summon up the means for the Sustentation of a Free Church in Scotland. Would but each real friend do his duty in his own moderate sphere, the thing were accomplished.

*November, 1842.*

89.—The offerings and services of this chapter were followed up by a near manifestation of God to Moses. And so it is, that if we draw near to God in the way of obedience and worship He will draw near to us. The light of God's countenance is lifted up on those who serve Him acceptably, and who, under the law to Christ, even the Beloved in whom they have acceptance, experience the truth of His saying—"To him who keepeth my words I will manifest myself." This was in all likelihood Christ himself, the Angel of the Covenant, who held converse with Moses. He spoke to him from between the cherubims, or from off the mercy-seat.—May I draw near, O God, to Thy mercy-seat in Heaven, and hear the voice thence—"Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Let my fellowship be with the Father and the Son, and may I ever draw nigh in the spirit of adoption, to God in Christ reconciling the world, and not imputing unto them their trespasses.

NUMBERS VIII. 1-12.—The tabernacle being now set up and dedicated, directions are given to Aaron respecting its service. The orders for the making of the candlestick were given forth before; but now follow the orders for the using of it. The candlestick being according to the pattern showed in the mount, the pattern even of heavenly things, this raises our attention to what is said elsewhere

of the candlesticks in Heaven, and of Him who is in the midst thereof. Our knowledge of these things is yet as but through a glass darkly.

Then follows the consecration of the Levites—a sacrificial consecration, reminding us, as does indeed the whole of the Mosaic ritual, of the preliminary and indispensable requisite ere we can enter with hope or with acceptance on any services. They formed a great ecclesiastical body; and dispersed as they were through Israel, we may be sure that they had much professional work to do beside the duties of the tabernacle or temple.

13-26.—The separation of the Levites from the rest of Israel is connected with the destruction of the first-born in the land of Egypt—God being pleased, in return for that visitation on their enemies, to claim all the first-born of Israel, whether of man or beast, to Himself, and being furthermore pleased to accept of the Levites in lieu of the first-born from among all the families of the people. They were set apart as ministering servants to the priests. They did not enter on this service, they did not make a beginning of it till they were purified, and till atonement was made for them.—O may a sense of the great atonement sanctify all our services, and withal inspire good courage into our hearts when we commence the work of the Lord, and as we abound therein.... It is well that they were so soon relieved from laborious service as at the age of fifty. Yet they seem not to have been exempted from all official duty and responsibility in consequence. They still ministered with their brethren, and had a charge to keep, though they did no active service. They might still be useful both for the purpose of guidance and guardianship—fit for trusts, though not for fatiguing tasks.

NUMBERS IX. 1-14.—This was the first, and it is thought the only, passover kept by the children of Israel in the wilderness. At its first institution it seems (Exodus xii. 25) to have been enjoined as if only to be kept after they had settled in the land of Canaan; and therefore, as God willed at least one celebration of it on their journey thither, it was all the more necessary that a fresh injunction should be given for this particular holding of it. It was on the precise day of the year they came out of the land of Egypt, from which event one twelvemonth only had now elapsed.... A particular case here occurred, for which a law was provided, a law to meet the occasion—even that those defiled by a dead body may nevertheless eat the passover. This is followed up by one or two general observations in regard to the keeping of the passover.

15-23.—The cloud was upon the tabernacle, but more especially that part of it where the ark of the testimony was. This was a daily miracle; and if we may judge from the conduct of the Israelites, it seems to have had nearly as little effect upon them as if it were but a daily and ordinary phenomenon. There is much in the Bible to warrant the apprehension that miracles were far less fitted to overbear the convictions of men than we who have had no personal trial of their efficacy are apt to imagine.... To “keep the charge of the Lord” may be understood variously. Some would have it that it signifies their keeping watch on the cloud, to take their intimations from it of the Lord’s will, whether he wanted them to move or to keep stationary; others, that it signifies the very acts of obedience to these intimations—that is, moving when He so charged them, or stopping when He so charged them.



One might infer from verse 22, that the periods of their encampment may at times have been very much prolonged. The change of signal from a cloud to a fire arose from the one being more visible through the day, and the other at night. We read of the taking up and settling of the cloud, not of the fire, because the journeying behoved to be in daylight, when the cloud was the signal.

NUMBERS x. 1-10.—The same God who gives all their expression both to sights and sounds, avails Himself of the influence of these for carrying into effect the details of his government over the people. The trumpet formed part of the sacred implements of the Hebrews, and they are pictured on the Arch of Titus among the spoils carried in triumphal procession through Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem. It is well to note, that while two trumpets were all that were ordered to be made now, there being only two priests, we read in 2 Chron. v. 12 of a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. They were to be blown by the sons of Aaron.... The alarm must have been a different sounding of the trumpet from an ordinary one—perhaps longer and louder, with a rapid succession and variety of notes. The alarms seem to have been sounded forth as the signals for the movement of the camp, and for war—but the alarm was not blown for the calling together of the congregation. God promises to remember them and to grant them protection and deliverance from their enemies. The blowing of the trumpets has something like the efficacy of prayer, or at least of a devout observance ascribed to it. God, the Hearer of the call which He Himself hath ordained, will remember them, and save them from their enemies when they blow the



alarm; and when they blew over their sacrifices and offering, it was for a memorial before God.

11-28.—They now received a signal for marching from the place where they had encamped so long, by the lifting up of the cloud from the tabernacle. Whatever light can be thrown on the geography of these movements is much to be prized, nor have I met with aught so interesting in this way as Robinson's Biblical and Geographical Researches. I doubt much, however, if even he could construct a map of the journeyings of the children of Israel through the wilderness, though he has certainly done much towards a satisfactory determination on the site of Sinai and of the Israelitish encampment on the south side of it.... They stopped when the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. Then follows the order of march agreeably to what had been before laid down in chapter ii. The sons of Gershon and Merari, who had charge of the bulkier and less carriageable parts of the tabernacle, which had to be transported in wagons, marched in the rear, following Judah's division. After this, the flank division of Reuben and Ephraim were set in motion, and between them the Kohathites who bore the sanctuary on their persons and not in wagons, so that they follow the Gershonites and Merarites, who by the time they came up had the tabernacle set and ready for them. Last of all, the division of Dan followed in the rereward of the general army.

29-36.—Hobab was the brother-in-law of Moses, and seems to have tarried with him during the whole time of the encampment at Sinai, but felt desirous of returning to his own place of residence on the Israelites taking their journey to Canaan. His experience and habits of life in

the wilderness would have been of the greatest avail to Moses, who obviously felt this, and makes it his argument for urging him to accompany the Israelites. His answer is not recorded; but it is probable that he went, and more especially as we find the traces of his descendants in Judges i. 16, and 1 Sam. xv. 6.... It is a remarkable function which the ark, or rather the cloud that rested upon it, performed in these journeys. It not only indicated when they were to move but where they were to move. The people followed the cloud, now lifted above the ark, and guiding them by the direction which it took—whether it proceeded in advance before the whole camp, or was visible to all from its elevation, though still centrally situated as the ark was usually.... These beautiful prayers of Moses are examples to us in all our courses; and they illustrate his own saying, "Lord, if Thou go not with me, let me not go hence."

NUMBERS XI. 1-15.—The Israelites soon lapse into their own natural perversity; and all the miracles of Sinai, which they had now left behind them, are again forgotten. The first complaints spoken of in this chapter do not seem to have broken out into any definite expression, though perhaps the very thing of which they afterwards murmured lay at the bottom of it. But before the demand for other food was distinctly lifted up, God sent His chastisement among them, and consumed some. These, however, prove ineffectual.... The mixed multitude were in all likelihood Egyptian hangers-on, as distinguished from the children of Israel. They felt the insipidity of the monotonous food on which they lived; and their vehement outcries infected the Hebrews, who in sympathy wept and

mourned along with them.... One can most readily enter into the feelings of Moses, though we cannot vindicate the tone of his remonstrances to God in heaven. It must have been very grievous to him to be so overborne; nor can we wonder at his feeling the charge of such a multitude heavier than he could bear. Their cumbrance and their clamour and strife were a great deal too much for him.

16-23.—That there were elders in Israel previous to this may be gathered from Exodus iii. 16, xxiv. 1, 9.—God did not relieve Moses from his charge, but gave him help for the fulfilment of its duties. Those elders who were wont to assist to the best of their natural abilities had now a supernatural endowment bestowed on them—even such as were selected by Moses at the commandment of God—selected by Moses, let it be remarked, not elected by the people, who certainly, on the present occasion, had abundantly shown that they were not fit to be intrusted with such a function.... What was said unto the people was evidently in a tone of crimination. They received a promise, no doubt, but also a rebuke along with it. There are several examples in Scripture, as Zechariah and others, of men being staggered by the greatness of what God announced that He was to do, and He testified His displeasure at their unbelief, even laid His chastisements upon them. There was an implied rebuke of Moses for his incredulous question on the present occasion—yet no punitive visitation because of it. The Lord makes a glorious assertion of His sovereignty in His reply to Moses. Let us ever trust in Him, and not be afraid of what man can do unto us.

24-35.—These seventy seem to have been selected from

among a larger body of elders. They may have been singled out because of their superiority over the rest, even anterior to the extraordinary endowments which were afterwards conferred on them. This, however, did not supersede these endowments; and accordingly God put His Spirit upon them, and so enabled them to speak of the things of God. It seems that from some cause or other two of the seventy nominees did not come with the rest to the tabernacle. Yet the Spirit found out them also; and when Moses was asked by Joshua to forbid their prophesying, the reply given by Moses was quite a parallel to that given by Christ, when the report was brought of one who worked miracles in His name, though he followed not with the disciples. (Mark ix. 39.).... It is interesting to observe how, even in the working of miracles, God does not dispense with the operation of secondary causes. He brought quails from the sea by the impulse of a wind.... God's blessing did not go along with the fulfilment of their unlawful request.—O God, let us have a care to will only what Thou willest, to refrain from every desire which conflicts with Thy pleasure, and to pray only for that which Thou givest us a warrant and an encouragement to ask at Thy hands.

NUMBERS XII.—It is not known whether the Ethiopian woman whom Moses married was a second wife, or Zipporah, whom, in the heat of their unseemly quarrel, Aaron and Miriam stigmatized as an Ethiopian. They complained of the monopoly which Moses had in the government of Israel—a complaint which Moses bore with his characteristic meekness—for which, however, he did not suffer, as the Lord appeared to avenge his cause. He

called and remonstrated with the malcontents, and points out a remarkable distinction between Moses and ordinary prophets—speaking with the former face to face, but to the latter only in a dream or vision. We have here the remarkable testimony of Moses, which is quoted in Paul's epistle to the Hebrews—"He is faithful in all my house." They are, therefore, sharply rebuked for having insulted the man whom God did so much honour by the more intimate fellowship and clearer revelations which He vouchsafed to him than to all other prophets. And, beside the rebuke laid upon both the offenders, there was a severe personal chastisement laid upon Miriam, which excited the apprehension and sympathy of her brother Aaron, and drew from him a humble confession of their joint fault, with a fervent entreaty in favour of their now leprous sister. Moses was easily prevailed upon to lift the voice of intercession in her behalf; and it is truly interesting to mark the analogy between God's anger and the anger of man in its natural workings. He consents to take off the leprosy, but not immediately. There must be a certain satisfaction rendered for the affront put on his favourite servant. She must undergo a period of humiliation, and so remained notoriously a leper for seven days—as much pilloried for her offence as if she had been made a spectacle.

NUMBERS XIII. 1-16.—One should like to know the precise geography of the position now occupied by the children of Israel. There are two Pharans or Feirans; but perhaps with the help of Robinson and others, I may ascertain the likeliest situation for the Paran where Kadesh is.... There is a great deal in Scripture to mark the similar respect paid to the tribes; and the names of the unworthy as well as

others are recorded. But of those now presented, there are two illustrious exceptions, Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Oshea—of two illustrious tribes also, Judah and Ephraim. Oshea, afterwards Joshua, had a very distinguished part to act in the history of the children of Israel, being the commander-in-chief of that great invasion which established them in the land of Canaan. Yet Caleb, though less conspicuous, bears a very eminent character too, and ranks high among the Scriptural worthies of the Old Testament.

17-25.—Not southward surely from the place where the Israelites were now encamped, but to the southern part of the land of Canaan, which was the nearest, and, by the way, the worst part of it.... The informations which Moses wanted to ascertain by the spies, might have been directly received by him at the mouth of God himself; but we see in this, as in many other instances, that a limit is imposed on the preternatural and the extraordinary—a limit fixed on the best of principles, no doubt, though we are not able to assign them.... It is unfortunate that I should not yet have overtaken the whole of Robinson's Biblical Researches, else it is possible I might have found some satisfaction relative to the sites of Hamath and other places. He is very full on Hebron; and it is most interesting to think of the identity of an extant town with that in which Abraham dwelt, and which was built, we are here told, seven years before Zoan in Egypt.... Eshcol is affixed at this day to a vale near Hebron, on the road to Jerusalem, or north of Hebron, and therefore in the way of the spies, if they were proceeding further into the country. The name is significant—meaning a little branch of dependent grapes.



26-33.—They reported it to be a land flowing with milk and honey ; but this was telling no more than God had said before—which saying, however, did not supersede their mission of inquiry. But they had an evil as well as a good report of the land, and expatiated on its dangers and difficulties—to the great discouragement, nay, despair of the people. It is thus that the fears and faint-heartedness of a few operate infectiously, and spread a like spirit among the many ; and it is thus, I observed, that in the present circumstances of our Church, the timidity and irresolution of certain of her friends, may restrain the religious public from taking as they might possession of the land.... There was great distrust in all this on the part of the spies—that want of faith, which is spoken of as a great provocative, and which is adverted to as such in the epistle to the Hebrews. Caleb and Joshua alone stood out against this, and proved faithful. Let us, in like manner, uphold our confidence in God in the midst of all that looks hard or menacing—assured that He will not forsake His Church in this the hour of her sore adversity. My God, I feel the need of guidance from on high.... By the land eating up its inhabitants, some understand the deficiency of its produce for the subsistence of its overflowing population ; others, that a plague was then raging in the country.

NUMBERS XIV. 1-9.—This was a truly humiliating exhibition of these perverse and stiffnecked children. They caught the infection of their cowardice from the messengers, who had acquitted themselves so ill of their errand. This was indeed a day of provocation. (Heb. iii. 8.) What an argument against unbelief. Let me, O God, look more boldly and more confidently to Heaven, nor affront Thee

any longer by my fears. And O let my heart be there, and my conversation be there—while not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, but grounded and settled in the faith.... One cannot wonder at the distress and perplexity into which the leaders of this rebellious host were thrown, or at the vehement remonstrance of Caleb and Joshua on the occasion. But all human appliances were ineffectual to the staying of this tumult—till God appeared to assert and avenge His own cause. This proved a great turning-point in the history of their peregrination, and postponed by a whole generation the settlement of the people in the promised land.

10-19.—This visible manifestation of God's presence would probably still the people while it lasted. In God's complaint of the people he affirms what ought to have been the power and effect of His stupendous miracles. It was a sore aggravation of their unbelief that it was unbelief in the face of all the signs which He had showed unto them. He gives way to the expression of His anger in the hearing of Moses, and reveals to him a purpose which He might have executed. The reply and the prayer of Moses are not only most honourable to him, but, when viewed in the light of an argument held by him with God, and to which God gave way as if it was in opposition to His first or original design, are charged with a most important theology. God is not a man that He should change; but in the government of His family He likes that they whom He has formed in His own image should think and feel as He does, and that in their processes of sentiment they should evince the mind and character of the Godhead. This is the true explanation of prayer. It has not the effect of making Him recede from His own objects—for it

is when we pray for such things as are agreeable to the will of God that we shall receive them; and the expression of a will on our part the same with His will, both indicates and is fitted to advance our resemblance to God. So it is that though He promises a new heart, He says—"for this I must be inquired after;" or our desire for a new heart, and so strong as to vent itself in prayer, must be at one with God's desire ere the new heart is given. And so too the rejection of the first proposal, and a prayer for the fulfilment of the second, passed through the mind of Moses, ere the corresponding effect was given to them by God.

20-35.—And God accordingly pardoned—according to Moses' word—but in such a way as to make fearful vindication of His own glory. A fell penalty was laid on the whole of this perverse generation. They had carried their repeated provocations to the extreme length of God's patience, and beyond it; and so one and all of them above twenty were sentenced to die in the wilderness, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua. They were to turn them back into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, from Paran, where they now were.

Moses and Aaron were commissioned to report the tidings of this heavy displeasure and vengeance to the people—accompanied with such a remonstrance as must not only have carried terror into their hearts, but as should have awakened a sense within them of the justice of their condemnation. And it ought to have aggravated their grief that their children came in as sufferers for their sins. Their children had to bear their whoredoms (verse 33) as well as themselves to bear their iniquities. (verse 35.).... "Ye shall know my breach of promise," or the cause of

its non-fulfilment. It is because you have transgressed the covenant; or, that God has forsaken you because you have forsaken Him.

36-45.—The spies, who had been the misleaders of the people, were singled out for vengeance, and died of the plague.—Save me, O God, from the doom of those who offend or ensnare any of thy little ones—causing them to fall.

The effect of Moses' report to the people concerning the displeasure and the sentence which had passed out against them from the Lord, was just like all their former repentances—profitless and vain. Even in their very relentings there was mixed up their own headstrong will; for it was in opposition to the remonstrances of Moses that they went up to battle, and were discomfited. This is a passage of great practical importance, and fitted to serve for guidance in the moral warfare of Christianity. We may learn from it, first, that repentance might come too late, and be unavailing—and, secondly, that we must not make a presumptuous onset upon temptation, else we shall be defeated, for God resisteth the proud, however ready He is to succour them who, in the way of duty, are assailed by temptations not of their own bringing on. He giveth grace unto the humble. Let us have the warrant of His call, be it of His word or His providence, for the place we occupy, or the path we are walking in; and we may count on all needful strength to protect and to uphold us. It is a truly different thing when we presumptuously go forth to the exposures of danger or difficulty, of our own will and in our own strength—making an experiment as it were upon God.

NUMBERS XV. 1-12.—The sentence of forty years in the

wilderness took effect—yet it but postponed the execution of God's unchangeable purpose to give the land of Canaan to the children of Israel—and His saying so to Moses was a proof that though He would not remit the chastisement then laid upon the people, still He was substantially reconciled to them after the grievous offence of which they had been guilty; and that He would not fall away from His first intents of kindness towards them. He holds out the pleasing anticipation—notwithstanding all that had happened—that they would yet come unto the land of their habitations . . . The law which is given here seems not the repetition of an old law, but the addition of a distinct and new law—the object of which was to regulate the proportion between the amount of meat-offerings and drink-offerings on the one hand, and on the other the kind of sacrifice that was made; even in such sacrifices as were made in the performance of a vow, or in freewill-offerings, or at their solemn feasts.

13-21.—The law which placed on the same footing, in respect of their offerings, the Israelite and the stranger, should mitigate our views respecting the exclusiveness of the Jewish religion. The stranger was distinguished from the Hebrew in respect to civil privileges, more especially the right of a permanent property in the land. But if he should be willing to make an offering to the Lord, he not only was to do as the Hebrew did, but would experience the same return, even that which was proper to a sacrifice. It would be of a sweet savour unto the Lord, and He therefore would be alike propitious to him as to the children of Abraham . . . The next prescription also had respect to their future settlement in Canaan—"When ye eat of the bread of the land." They could make no such

offering from the manna of the wilderness. It was more than a yearly recognition of God's bounty which was required—more than the offering of the first-fruits and the tithes. There behoved also to be a daily recognition, or at least an offering every time they baked—viz. a cake, which of course fell to the lot of the priest for the use of his family. The withholding of this offering seems to be charged on the part of the people by Haggai i. 9; and in Ezekiel xlv. 30 there is such an allusion to this law as speaks at least of the duty of our daily acknowledgment to Him who is the giver of our daily bread.

22-31.—This seems to be a repetition of the law laid down at greater length in the fourth chapter of Leviticus, which is probably referred to when told here in general to observe it “according to their manner.” What is called a sin-offering there, is here called a burnt-offering. There is no mention, however, made of a kid of the goats to be offered for the unwilling sins of the congregation—but only for those of a ruler or one of the common people. The degree at which sin comes to be presumptuous in the sense which it bears in this passage is not defined. Certain it is, that one may sin or break the commandment—yet not in the spirit of contempt for God's law. There may be a painful struggle, during which the fear of God's displeasure may be one of the conflicting elements, though overborne by the force of temptation. The circumstance of this presumptuousness not being explicitly set forth, does not take away from the practical usefulness of this law, but rather, perhaps greatly promotes and subserves it as being fitted to awaken our vigilance and alarm, and so to keep us further within the bounds of safety. A clear line of demarcation between the pardonable and the



presumptuous, may have suggested to many a mind how near they might proceed toward this limit without passing beyond. The want of this clearness, on the other hand, might lead us to keep at the greatest possible distance from the great transgression.—Matt. xii. 32; Heb. x. 26.

32-41.—There is here a striking historical testimony to the sacredness and divine obligation of the Sabbath law. Let it not be lost even upon us in our modern day. We are now told, to be sure, that it was not instituted for its own sake—although the Jews perhaps were trained to the observation of it more on the principle of its being a Divine appointment than of its subserviency to the spiritual good of man. We should be still more religiously observant of this day—seeing that, additionally to the first principle still in force, we have had the second more distinctly announced to us in the memorable saying, that the Sabbath was made for man.

To make the Sabbath observance a duty which should terminate in itself, and without regard to its moral influences, is a specimen of the same senseless superstition which would attach a mysterious virtue to the mere *opus operatum* of sacraments and church forms. And the same is true of the imposition of fringes—good as memorials of duty, but utterly superstitious and vain if the mere wearing of them were made the *terminus ad quem* of the observance. It is in kind accommodation to our corporeal nature that such an institution was devised; but separated from its end, it is but an empty ceremonial—even as the Sabbath is when separated from its end.—Let us not forget, O Lord, that the flesh is unprofitable and vain, and that all Thy words are spirit and life.

NUMBERS XVI. 1-11.—Their last and greatest chastisement had not, it would appear, quelled the unconquerable hardness and perversity of the children of Israel. They brake forth into a fresh outrage recorded in this chapter, and forming one of the most memorable passages of Bible history. Certain of the tribes of Levi and Reuben took offence at the pre-eminence of Moses and Aaron, and claimed a greater share in the authority which they exercised over the people, as if they took too much upon them in so doing.... The falling upon the face seems to indicate a strong sense of evil in the matter which causes the prostration, as when the congregation proposed, on the report of the spies, to return into Egypt, or as at present when this formidable mutiny sprung up in such force and formidableness against the rulers who had been set over the people by God Himself. Moses, full of faith, proposes a test, in the confidence that God would appear upon his side; and then remonstrates first with the Levites, who, not satisfied with the distinction that had been put upon them above all the other tribes, would aspire to the priesthood also. This expostulation came better from Moses, who himself was but a Levite. He appears not for himself, but Aaron, and asks who is he that they should murmur against him who received his appointment from God; and against whom in fact they were most unnaturally and unduteously striving.

12-18.—Moses spoke what he had to say direct to Korah, because, being a Levite, he was near the tabernacle, like all of his tribe. But he had to send for Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, and therefore encamped at a greater distance from the tabernacle. Their murmuring was against Moses more especially, whereas the

Levites' murmuring was more directed against Aaron—the one charging Moses for his assumed pre-eminence in things secular, making himself altogether a prince over them—the other complaining of Aaron for his pre-eminence in things sacred, seeking the priesthood also, because not content with their status as Levites. (verses 9 and 10.) . . . The prolongation of their stay in the wilderness formed a very natural ground of complaint to Dathan and Abiram. "Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?" forms part of their remonstrance; and the meaning generally ascribed to it is—Wilt thou treat us as if we were blind and saw not through your ambition and injustice? Moses, though said to be the meekest of men, was very indignant at the unmerited severities which were cast upon him; and uttered a passionate prayer which he mixed up with a vindication of himself. He further challenges them to the experiment of to-morrow, calling on Korah and his company to attempt that burning of incense which had been restricted recently to the priests; and to see what the result would be should they, unlicensed by any such authority from Heaven, intrude themselves into that office, the monopoly of which they grudged to Aaron and his family. The number of censers (two hundred and fifty) which he challenged them to use, was equal to the number of disaffected princes. (verse 2.)

19-30.—Korah gathered all the congregation against Moses and Aaron—not that all were adverse, for Moses succeeded in separating the bulk of them from the rebels—but all might easily be brought together from a desire to witness the coming spectacle. Yet there must have been something in this general muster to provoke the Lord; for after His glory had appeared He asked Moses and Aaron

to separate themselves from the assembled multitude, that He might consume them—after which, and having got the intercessions of the two chiefs on behalf of the people, He sent Moses amongst them, who prevailed on them to move to a distance from the tents of these rebellious men. The tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram may have been some hall of council that had been erected by the rebels, and seems distinct from the tents of Dathan and Abiram, where they stood with their wives and children. Then came the solemn warning of Moses, a prophecy before a miracle—and that truly a most stupendous and awful one, and which Moses never could have ventured to predict, but in the full and warranted confidence of his own inspiration.

*December, 1842.*

31-40.—And it was a brief prophecy, for no sooner was it uttered than it was fulfilled. The earth opened and swallowed up the rebels and all that belonged to them. No wonder that a judgment so signal should spread such terror throughout the congregation. It is remarkable that the two hundred and fifty with censers in their hands were destroyed, not as the others, but by fire from the Lord, even as Nadab and Abihu were, who in like manner had censers in their hands, and were offering incense. In the one case the offence was by priests, who offered incense with unhallowed fire; in the other by men not priests, who offered incense with unhallowed hands. For the fire may have been taken from off the altar (verse 7); and hence, perhaps, the reason why the censers are called hallowed (verse 37); or they may have been termed so because devoted, and an end put to them as censers. The lesson of which they were made the

memorial was, that none but they of the seed of Aaron should intrude into the priesthood. They who despise dominion and speak evil of dignities are said to perish in the gainsaying of Core.

41-50.—Even this dread visitation did not quell the murmurings of the people. It took much to subdue them. Doubtless, it was a sore dispensation under which they had been laid—that of exile or imprisonment for life in the wilderness; and had it not been for prompt and overbearing terrors brought to bear upon them, Moses and Aaron would have been very unsafe in their hands. And so when their discontent against their rulers broke out afresh, a visible glory from the Lord again interposed to chasten and overawe them—insomuch that the intercessory humiliation of Moses and Aaron was again called for to avert the destroying wrath of the Almighty. The plague had by this time begun its ravages; and Aaron's mediation for the staying of the plague is one of the most remarkable passages in the Old Testament history. It has been often referred to as a type of Christ, who has by the incense of His own sacrifice and merits appeased the wrath of God, and so averted from all who live by Him the penalty which their sins have deserved. He stands between the living and the dead. They who are within, and have the Son, have life. They who are without, and have not the Son, have not life.

NUMBERS XVII.—Many appliances were needed to keep this rebellious people in order—and more especially now when fretted by their long detention in the wilderness, and perhaps not the less provoking that it was a detention of their own bringing on. Much required to be done to

maintain the due ascendancy of their rulers over them—miracles of terror to subdue and overawe as well as miracles to convince—the one recorded in this chapter being of the latter description. Aaron's rod that budded forms one of the things enumerated by Paul as being laid up in the ark of the covenant. It was kept as a token against the rebels, and for the express purpose of taking away their murmuring. It was the authority of Aaron in particular that this miracle was intended to uphold and to vindicate. . . . It seems uncertain what construction should be placed on the consequent speeches of the people. It may have been the outbreking still of a remaining discontent; or they may have been the arguments and acknowledgments of a submissive spirit amongst them.—Let us henceforth stand in awe and sin not. Let us feel the reverence that becomes us on the precincts of that holy ground which we dare not violate but at the expense of those tremendous inflictions which we have recently experienced.

NUMBERS XVIII. 1-7.—There comes forth now a more explicit deliverance on the respective parts of the Levites, and a line of demarcation expressly laid down for the purpose of guarding against the inroads which had recently been made, as well as the dread chastisements which had followed in the train of them. The people had just borne the iniquity of their violations. These I have effectually checked; and you must bear the iniquity, if now you are to permit such violations—by suffering Levites to intrude in the office of the priesthood. They have their assigned department. It is for you to take charge of the sanctuary and altar, and for them to take charge of what remains of the tabernacle. The Levites were given as servants to



the priests—as a gift to do the service of the tabernacle, or a gift of service—whereas the honourable office of the priesthood was a service of gift. The stranger—that is he who was neither priest nor Levite—if he invaded the department of either, should be put to death.

8-19.—In this passage we are informed of certain perquisites which appertained to the priesthood—certain parts of the votive and freewill-offerings which God assigned to the sons of Aaron, being the priesthood of Israel, and which should form part of their maintenance. It included both flesh and bread, as well as wine and oil—the ingredients both of the sacrifices and of the meat and drink-offerings, and the first-fruits withal, as also the first-born of the land. Both the legal and the voluntary enter into this provision, as they might and ought to do at the present day; and things which are now conflicted against should in fact be compounded with each other. Let it further be observed that the priests had a money stipend, as well as a ritual one—for they got the price of what was redeemed—as the first-born of man and of those beasts which could not be offered in sacrifice.... Every devoted thing that was devoted not for destruction but for an offering, was to be the priest's—unless it were a thing not consumable, as an implement which served for the use of the temple.... A covenant of salt denotes a perpetual covenant, a covenant never to be broken, as in 2 Chron. xiii. 5; and this from the preserving quality of salt by which it keeps substances from going to dissolution.

20-32.—The priests were to have no land, and so were exonerated from all care of its culture and management. They had cities and suburbs, however; and it is thought also that it was competent for them to have lands

by bequest—else how could Jeremiah and Barnabas have lands to sell? God was their portion, and already as such had assigned to them parts of what was offered to Himself. Neither had the Levites any landed inheritance; but this was made up to them by tithes and by the honourable nature of their service, which the rest of the Israelites dare not intrude into, or come nigh the tabernacle, but under the penalty of death. . . . The iniquity which the Levites are to bear in verse 23, seems to be their general responsibility for the right discharge of those services which were peculiarly theirs, including perhaps more especially the penalty that lay upon them if they negligently permitted others than of their own order to usurp their office. And the Levites, it would appear, had to tithe their own tithes for the priests. The tithe of your tithe is the same acquittal for you that the tithe of their corn and wine is for the rest of the children of Israel. They were to give the best to the priests, after which, what remained they had the same free use of that others who paid tithes to them had of the produce of their own threshing-floors and wine-presses. Then no reckoning could be had with them, or sin charged upon them after they had made over to the priests their due. In like manner as the people at large, while they supported the Levites were not to usurp their office, (verse 22,) so the Levites, while they supported the priests, were not to usurp theirs. Others understand that by the pollution of the holy things is meant their giving what was of inferior quality, and not giving their best to the priests.

NUMBERS XIX. 1-10.—This is a peculiar ordinance for purification from sin, which stands apart from the usual

sacrifices, in a character and with a significancy of its own. In as far as the red heifer was burnt without the camp, it was a type of Christ who suffered without the gate. In as much as Eleazar, who took of her blood, and he who burnt her, and he who gathered her ashes, all contracted uncleanness by having to do with her, it signifies that sin had been laid upon her, insomuch that a ceremonial uncleanness was contracted by all who handled her. The circumstance of her blood being sprinkled directly in front of the tabernacle, though at a great distance from it as being without the camp, and therefore though not at the altar yet before the altar, gives a sacrificial import to the animal's death.... Let it be remarked, that the ingredients mixed with the ashes of the heifer are the same with those used in the cleansing of lepers. (Lev. xiv. 6, 7.) Altogether they formed a water of separation for the children of Israel—a purification for sin. A water of *separation*, because the sprinkling of it had the effect of separating the patient from his sins. Sanctification, in its primitive meaning, is separation.

11-22.—This water served for the general use of the congregation—to be applied to those who had contracted a ceremonial uncleanness from certain causes, and in virtue of which application they were held to be purified. This water of separation must have been in constant request. For how is it possible that any person could die and be buried without the contact of him by one or more of his attendants? Even though the water of separation were needed for nothing else than for this particular case, it must have been in daily demand. And that there were other cases of uncleanness which did not require this special water, or a period of seven days for the purification,

is obvious both from Leviticus xxii. 6, and also from the passage now before us ; for it would appear that he who sprinkled the water of purification, and even he who touched it, contracted uncleanness thereby—yet an uncleanness which was removed by the washing of common water, and at so short a period as the evening of the same day. It seems inexplicable that the sprinkling of the water of separation should remove uncleanness from him who was the subject sprinkled upon, while the act of sprinkling it, and the touching of it, brought on uncleanness.

NUMBERS xx. 1-13.—The still unquelled spirit of stout and daring rebellion on the part of the children of Israel, again breaks out ; it does not appear how soon or how long after the last signal manifestations of the Divinity amongst them. Moses and Aaron had recourse to their usual expression of deep emotion : They fell on their faces, and the glory of the Lord made its appearance. The place of this transaction is the wilderness of Zin, different from Sin. (Ex. xvi.) And its Meribah differs from the Meribah of Rephidim. (Ex. xvii. 7.) It gets the same name, however, because of the same thing being there done over again . . . The offence of Moses, which cost him so signal a chastisement, does not appear very clearly. Our most definite information of it is in Ps. cvi. 33, “ He spake unadvisedly with his lips.” He was ordered to *speak* to the rock—instead of which he *smote* the rock, and twice, as if in passion ; and to speak to the *rock*, instead of which he spake to the *people*, and in passion too. These acts indicate perhaps a certain degree of unbelief, and there may have been other acts not recorded. Over and above all

this, God can see the unbelief without such indications ; and we are authoritatively told, that God was offended for his want of faith. The whole exhibition, too, tended to degrade instead of sanctifying the Most High in the sight of the children of Israel. Though Moses failed to sanctify the Lord, He sanctified Himself, both by his miracle of power, and His sentence of righteous displeasure against even the greatest man of the nation.

14-29.—They were now on the borders of the Edomites, the children of Esau, and therefore the descendants of Abraham, related to Israel by the ties of consanguinity, and so not doomed to extermination like the Canaanites. And so in keeping with this, a most civil and brotherly message was sent them by Israel, though in return for it they got a most unbrotherly reply.

In Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, ii. 582, there is a very satisfactory geographical argument on Kadesh and Mount Hor. Mount Hor seems one of the best authenticated objects in the geography of Scripture ; and its claims are universally recognised among the Arabs by the tradition of Aaron's tomb upon its summit. Aaron partook of the delinquency of Moses at Meribah, and so partook also of his sentence—that he should not enter Canaan. Altogether, the narrative of his death and its circumstances, forms a beautiful and affecting passage in holy writ.

NUMBERS XXI. 1-9.—King Arad dwelt in the south, not to the south of where the Israelites were now, but in the south of Palestine. He was rather king of Arad. (Josh. xii. 14.) It is uncertain whether the destruction of him and of his cities was not an after event accomplished by Joshua, and inserted by an after historian ; but the vow



appears to have been lifted up by the Israelites at this time, and as they retired southward after the advantage which the king of Arad had obtained over them.

We have in the next passage a very precious type of Christ, whose express reference to it forms an example and a warrant for the typical interpretation of many other events and personages in the Old Testament. The doctrinal illustration which might be drawn from this allegorical representation of the Saviour on the Cross by the brazen serpent, is of the highest importance. The Israelites did not look to their wounds but to the serpent in order to be healed. Neither had they to inquire into the strength of their faith. They had but to lift their eyes, which no doubt implied however a certain degree of faith. —Let us not defer lifting our eyes and looking unto Jesus, till we are satisfied that we feel our own sinfulness enough, or have faith enough to be justified therefrom. The freeness of the Gospel remedy, and the accessibility thereof, may be well expounded and set forth from this beautiful representation of it.

10-20.—The geography of this passage is worthy of being studied in all the light which Robinson and other authors may have thrown upon it. It seems obvious that the children of Israel, in returning southward to the Red Sea about the present Akaba, at the bottom of the extreme eastern bay, in counterpart to Suez, which is at the bottom of the western one, then fetched a compass and kept on the east side of the country of the Edomites. The Amorites seem to have lain on their way northward to Moab; and they came into conflict with the king of the one people, before they came into that remarkable and ever-memorable converse which they held through



Balaam with the king of the other . . . . The beautiful little song which was composed and chanted on the occasion of their finding water, is in pleasing accordance with the poetry and primitive interests and feelings of these ancient times. The blessing of water was the subject both of their prayers and thanksgivings, and it would look as if it had been made to spring forth miraculously, and as the result of a solemn and prescribed process, guided by Moses and executed by the nobles and princes of Israel. Had it been got at naturally, a more strenuous effort would in all likelihood have been necessary than that of the rulers with their staves.

21-35.—At this time the Amorites had taken possession of a great part of the territory of Moab, out of which they had driven the previous occupiers. The Moabites were dispossessed not by the Israelites but by the Amorites, who in their turn were dispossessed by the Israelites. It appears from the message of Jephthah, (Judges xi. 23, 24,) that Israel was at this time on the east of Moab, and that the Amorites were between him and the remaining territory of Moab. The peaceable message was spurned at by Sihon, and this was resented by the Israelites in a different manner from what a like notice of the Edomites was . . . . The Amorite song was a record of their successful invasion of the territories of Moab.

Og adjoined to the children of Ammon. His territory was north of Jabbok, which was called the border of the Ammonites. One should like to know the precise localities of Og's territory, and that of the Ammonites; and what remained both to the Moabites and Ammonites after that Israel was settled, and a certain portion of them took up their habitation to the east of Jordan.

NUMBERS XXII. 1-8.—This is truly one of the most picturesque and striking and memorable of our Scripture narratives. It would appear that the Moabites had occupancy still in part at least of their own region ; and that the plains of Jordan opposite to Jericho still belonged to them. Balak was king of the Moabites at that time. The Midianites were distinct from the Moabites—(1 Chr. i. 46)—but near them . . . . It seems unsettled whether Balaam was wholly a conjurer, or to what extent he was a true prophet. He lived by the river of the land of his people—that is, he lived among his own people or in his own country. He had the credit of supernatural gifts from Balak at least, who deputed elders both from Moab and Midian to wait on him with the rewards of divination—such as the fees of fortune-telling are in our own day. It is said by Peter that he loved the wages of unrighteousness, (2 Pet. ii. 15 ;) and we do require the aid of the New Testament to help us in estimating the character of this extraordinary person, whose actual converse with God forms not the least inexplicable part of his history. We must at all events conceive of him as under a strong natural bias towards the bribes wherewith the messengers of Balak came loaded as offerings from their master.

9-20.—It may seem strange that God should hold converse with one of so questionable a character as Balaam. But we are no judges of this. He held converse with Abimelech and Laban ; and with the Prince of wicked men himself He is represented as holding converse in the book of Job . . . . The first reply of Balaam to the messengers looks well—though even in it there may be detected the embryo affection which misled and ruined him. He does not say peremptorily—I must

not and cannot go, for God has positively forbidden it ; but that God had not given him leave—as if the leave might afterwards be gotten, though not yet. Balak and his messengers seem at least to have acted on this imagination—for they sent him a second message ; and then it is that Balaam makes more distinct betrayal of the wrong affection which lorded over him—though yet struggling with a principle that vented itself in the utterance of a strong and righteous determination. But why did he make a second attempt on the mind and will of God, as if He had not expressed Himself before in a way the most absolute, and which ought not to have been made the subject of a second experiment ? And the result was, that God gave him the leave he was evidently so much set upon. This might seem strange ; but it accords with God's ordinary moral dealings, when questions of conscience and duty are in agitation within the breast. He leaves men at length to their own heart's lust. How frequent is it, for example, that men will flatter themselves with the resolution of acting uprightly in given circumstances of temptation, yet feel irresistibly drawn to adventure themselves among the circumstances, and so give their presence to the scene where the temptation is going on.

21-35.—The kindling of God's anger because Balaam went, seems to warrant the hypothesis, that when God gave him leave He did so in the way of permission only, but without the sanction of any order—and so as to leave himself responsible for the promptings of his own perverse inclination. And certain it is, that the accordancy is still kept up between the natural or ordinary process, and the actual recorded process in the doings of Balaam, however

much the miraculous interposition of God had to do with them. God, who resists the proud, was displeased at the presumptuous movement of Balaam towards the scene of temptation, even though he should have been honestly and confidently resolved to stand his ground against it. The struggle with his ass tested the strength of this his perverse and wrong inclination. This part of the narrative, so much the jeer of infidelity, is referred to by Peter, when he speaks of the dumb ass rebuking with man's voice the madness of the prophet. Balaam still persists in his wish to go, and evinces the operation of it, notwithstanding the confession of his own sinfulness, by submitting it as a question to be determined by the angel whether he should go or not, instead of at once, and on his own proper movement, doing the clearly right thing, which was to return and keep out of the way of evil. The renewed leave he got is still most strikingly analogous to the progress of a corrupt will under the influence of self-deceit—when the mind gets more set than ever on some alluring objects of temptation, though with the still remaining purpose of holding fast one's integrity when the encounter comes.

36-41.—At his first interview with Balak, the good thing in Balaam had as much ascendancy as led to the utterance of the resolution that he would speak only as God bade him. Altogether, there is here an unaccountable mingling of parties, both celestial and terrestrial. We have here a soothsayer, bent on his own gains; yet so far countenanced by God as to receive communications from Him. And we have an idolatrous prince sending for him and doing him honour. And we see him welcomed to the presence of Balak in the midst of his heathen sacri

fices—for it would appear that he was a worshipper of Baal—and took up Balaam to the high places of his god. This is a subject on which we must consent to be informed; for otherwise we do not know how the matter stood in that embryo and progressive state of God's dispensations—when the true and the false come into such strange conjunctions with each other. Balaam seems willingly led by Balak wherever the king chose to carry him; and his whole exhibition consists with the idea that he was only held by an inward restraint, which was adverse to his own inclination, from going the whole length that Balak would have him do.

NUMBERS XXIII. 1-10.—The mystery is thickened by this succession of the sacrifices offered now at the order of Balaam, to the sacrifices of the last chapter offered by Balak of his own accord—the one pagan, the other professedly to the true God; yet it may well be said pagанизed. However, we must take the narrative as we find it; and our truest philosophy is implicitly to receive it.... God met Balaam; and on hearing from him of his altars and sacrifices, furnished him with an utterance that he was to pour forth in the hearing of Balak; and it is an utterance which has in it not only the character but the high tone of a most eloquent inspiration. This is all the more remarkable, that Balaam, it would appear from ch. xxiv. 1, went forth to seek enchantments, there being, therefore, a corrupt mixture of the superstitious with the sacred in the approaches which he made to the higher powers. Be this as it may, we can see nothing in all Scripture of a more solemn and lofty strain than the effusions and announcements of this most anomalous and

questionable prophet . . . . His concluding wish may be regarded as the ascription of a final blessedness, along with all the other blessings pronounced by him to righteous Israel. But it may also be conceived of as a wish for himself; and it marks the strugglings in his mind of conscience and right desire, amid all the evil influences which are at work with his inner man, and which at length lorded it over him.

11-24.—Balaam's reply to Balak's reproach is quite consistent with the idea, that, though compelled to utter what the Lord put into his mouth, the inclination of his heart was towards Balak, and that because of his love for the wages of unrighteousness. The same God who in the case of his true prophets impelled them to utterances which they did not understand, could impel deceitful and unrighteous prophets to utterances which they did not like;—could, in fact, convey the expression of His mind through human agents, though their understanding did not go along with what they were made to say, and though their wills were revolted by it. Balaam evinces the corruptness of his own heart, by not breaking loose from Balak, but resigning himself to all his various expedients and attempts for a favourable deliverance. It was Balak's sacrifice that he attended—"Stand here by *thy* burnt-offering." . . . This second effusion of Balaam has in it all the character of a genuine inspiration. There is in it a noble homage to the truth and unchangeableness of God. Balaam almost intimates the bias of his own mind, when he says of God's blessing—"I cannot reverse it;" and he confesses to the unlawful divinations and enchantments in which he had borne a part, when he says that they were of no avail against Israel.



25-30.—Balaam, in reply again to Balak, renews his protestations of the necessity under which he lay to bless the children of Israel. But this did not prevent a third and last endeavour to elicit an adverse sentence against the people of God. It was a peradventure, or first experiment on Heaven, and which Balaam seems to have most readily gone along with.... The last sacrifice seems to have been made by Balak; but the present one is ordered and arranged by Balaam. The arrangement was the same as that prescribed by him on a former occasion, as recorded in the beginning of this chapter; after which Balak, as in verse 14, volunteered the same arrangement, which Balaam now again repeats.... The mountain to the top of which Balak carried him was Peor, the most eminent of the high places of Baal, and which was therefore called Baal-peor. This composition of services—this mingled homage to the true and false God—may startle us; but we are not in a position to judge of these things.

NUMBERS XXIV. 1-9.—It is obvious, from the first verse, that Balaam till now had not been perfectly assured of God's determination to bless Israel; but, flattering himself with the contrary expectation, had made repeated trials to make it good. He seems only now to have fully ascertained the mind of God; and so makes demonstration of his previous unbelief and previous worthlessness. He is, however, made the involuntary instrument of further revelations; and what he now utters, when the Spirit of God came upon him, is in the very highest style and strain of lofty inspiration. We cannot fix on any portion of Scripture that bears a nobler or more sustained elevation than these effusions poured forth by Balaam from the

mountains, as he looked down on the tents of Israel, stretched out in full and far perspective before him. His eyes were now open, and he was made to see the vision of the Almighty, and so breaks forth into a prophetic rapture on the fortunes of this favoured people, whom God had selected from among all the nations of the earth—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"... Fertility and power are here promised; and Agag is spoken of either as a present king in that neighbourhood, or prophetically as the future king of whom we read in Scripture.

10-25.—Balak's indignation and Balaam's vindication of himself come in between the two prophetic illapses of this chapter—in the latter of which there is a reach of anticipation that goes further down, we think, than even our present day, embracing both the nearer types and the more distant antitypes—David being a specimen of the one, and Christ being the fulfilment of the other. The literal king destroyed the corners of Moab; the spiritual king will subdue all the children of Sheth, or the old human race.... The most precious part of this prophecy is that which relates to the Star and the Sceptre, so picturesquely made to shine forth in the oracular deliverance of this seer upon the mountains, who furthermore looks beyond the nations around him and then in being, and shadows forth things which are to take place in the latter ends of the world, when our modern Europe, which has so lorded it over Asia, and held the Jews in persecution and bondage, shall have to resign its supremacy before the glories of God's ancient people.... The Kenites (1 Sam. xv. 6) seem to have been mixed with or contiguous to the Amalekites.... How graphically are those habitations

described which were formed like the excavations of Petra.... The Kenites are associated in the minds of many of our Biblists with the descendants of Jethro.

NUMBERS XXV.—We have here the record of an idolatrous defection on the part of a new generation of Israelites, not of the men who had fallen in the wilderness, but of their children on the eve of entrance into the promised land. They joined themselves unto Baal-peor the god of the Moabites, for which the displeasure of the true God, jealous of his honour, broke loose upon them.

The Midianites were confederate with the Moabites, but seem to have been a distinct people from them.... It is a remarkable expression, as if attaching a sacrificial virtue to the death of those slain by Phinehas, when it is said that he made atonement for the children of Israel; and in keeping with the priestly character of such an act, the covenant was given to them of an everlasting priesthood. Balaam, we have no doubt, was implicated in these wiles of the Midianites; and perhaps what is called in Rev. ii. 14 "the doctrine of Balaam" might throw some light on the peculiar vices wherewith the Church of Pergamos was charged. Certain it is, that he "taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." His doing this, after the visions which he saw and the utterances which he was prompted to make, was the consummation of his iniquity—the hardihood of a desperate resistance to light—an unquelled spirit of evil that withstood all the manifestations from which it had vainly tried to make an escape for the accomplishment of its purposes.

NUMBERS XXVI. 1-4.—Preparatory to their taking possession of the land of Canaan, a new census was made of the population, that is, of those who were able to go to war, that being the service which was now before them. The special interpositions of God on their side did not supersede, it would appear, this computation of their forces—another instance of the miraculous not overbearing the natural. We have many such instances in Scripture; and ignorant as we are of the line of demarcation between these—this, too, is a matter on which we must submit to be informed. It says, in the fourth verse, that the numbering now was to be on the same principle with the numbering that Moses was commanded to make of the former generation, that is, of those who had come with him from the land of Egypt—in other words, those only were to be numbered who were upwards of twenty, and able for war. It is worthy of remark, that none of those numbered now had come forth of Egypt, being all born in the wilderness—so that none of the whole host, save Joshua and Caleb, exceeded sixty years of age. There must have been an unusual lack of old men.

5-14.—He begins this enumeration with Reuben, the eldest, but does not keep the order of seniority throughout. In the census of the first chapter it is said that it was of all above twenty—*able to go to war*—which would scarcely include those above sixty. Therefore it is not the death of all of the last generation which can alone account for the smaller amount of the first census—particularly in certain tribes—than of the present one, as the very youngest of that generation would by this time have been towards sixty, beyond which men are scarcely fit for war... The tribe of Simeon falls short by more than one-

half of what it was when they came out of Egypt. But indeed no general explanation is called for, as many of the tribes had increased. Amid these names and reckonings, there are often, as in Chronicles and elsewhere, little memorabilia inserted, which are worthy of being treasured up. On comparing the note here taken of Korah's rebellion, it is said of his sons that they perished not, which tallies with the direct history, where we are told that all the families of Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up (ch. xvi. 27, &c.)—whereas Korah with the 250 who offered incense were consumed by fire from Heaven; and his family may have been at the time in their own tent near the tabernacle.

15-32.—Gad is here brought in before Judah, though Judah was the elder of the two; but this order harmonizes with that which is observed in the first chapter. And the same order obtains throughout in each of the distinct enumerations, with the remarkable exception that Ephraim and Manasseh are here made to change places—Manasseh being put before Ephraim. Here, too, there occurs another example of the *notitiæ*, which have just been spoken of, in the account taken of Er and Onan having died in the land of Canaan. It is natural that in the act of recording numbers, all that remarkably tended to lessen them should be adverted to, as the destruction of Dathan and Abiram, when employed in reckoning the tribe of Reuben, and also the premature deaths of Er and Onan— notwithstanding which, however, the tribe of Judah was the most populous of them all.

33-51.—The case of Zelophehad's daughters is recorded as one that gave rise to a principle of law in the matter of family inheritance.... There is not only a change of



place between Manasseh and Ephraim in the order of this enumeration—so that Manasseh is here placed before Ephraim—but there is a complete reversal in the populousness of their tribes, Manasseh being more than double of Ephraim now ; whereas by the former census Ephraim was nearly two-thirds of Manasseh. Still the blessing of Jacob held good upon the whole ; for whatever the proportion between the elder and the younger now, the younger had a far more prominent part among the tribes of Israel. Considered as mere phenomena of population, there is nothing to puzzle us in the fluctuations of this element, from time to time—as, for example, that Dan should have had but one head of a family in his tribe, and yet that that tribe should have become among the more populous.

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52-56.—Let it be observed, that the sum-total of this enumeration is less than that of the one taken when they had come out of Egypt, by eighteen hundred and twenty persons. The census was called for not merely to estimate the military force of the nation, but for the regulation of the allotments among the tribes, or the division which was shortly to take place of the land of Canaan. The determination by lot did not take it out of the Lord's disposal at whose disposal the lot is, and who assigns to all the men upon earth the bounds of their habitation. This lot, however, must have determined the place of settlement for the different tribes, and not the extent of their respective portions, as this must have been measured by the respective populations. The many would receive more and the few less, that there might be an equality.

57-65.—There are often little additional topics of



information mixed up in these catalogues of names—as here that Jochebed, Moses' mother, was born in Egypt. The destruction of Nadab and Abihu is recorded, perhaps as affecting the population of the tribe. The offering of strange fire was their crime.—O God, let me worship Thee with another fervour than that of nature, even with fire from Thine own sanctuary—that which accompanies the baptism of the Holy Spirit, spoken of by John the Baptist when he announces the Saviour.... All the males of a month old, instead of twenty years old, were numbered of the tribe of Levi as in the former census, which the present one exceeded by a thousand souls.

The impressive fact is here distinctly recorded of the disappearance by death of every man of the former generation, save Caleb and Joshua.

NUMBERS XXVII. 1-11.—This case of Zelophehad's daughters gave rise to an ordinance in Israel respecting the inheritance of females—in virtue of which they, in the event of there being no son, should succeed to the property. It is thus that names and families were kept up in Israel, a matter on which great stress was laid, and which led to such care in the preservation of genealogies. The case of these daughters not only led to a law which provided for all such cases, but to an extension of the law which provided for other cases also, as when there were no children left by the proprietor, and he had even no brethren to succeed him. It is interesting to remark here, that the supernatural legislation of this people did not entirely supersede the process by which ordinary legislation is ripened and perfected—when instead of a system of laws that anticipated and provided for all

beforehand, laws were made to meet occasions as they arose, and these occasions were waited for so as to make law to a great extent the product of experience. It is a remarkable expression where the daughters say of their father, that he died not in the rebellion of Korah, but in his own sin. He had not incurred any judicial forfeiture by joining in that rebellion, but as ordinary men do at the hand of God, and as a sharer in the common mortality as he was in the common sin of all. There seems here a recognition of the truth, that death came upon all men for that all have sinned.

12-23.—And so Moses was not permitted to cross Jordan, but died in one of the mountains of Moab—and this because of the rebellion shared between him and Aaron at the striking of the rock in Meribah. Moses, acquiescing in the personal disposal of him by God, pours forth the spirit of a patriot in behalf of Israel, and begs a worthy successor to himself, who might take charge of them. God is here aptly designated “the God of the spirits of all flesh,” when asked to appoint a right man over the congregation. The Lord, in counterpart to this, says of Joshua, that he is a man in whom His Spirit is—the Spirit—giving a strong impression of that Spirit the Holy Ghost, to whom belongeth personality. In many places of the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is so introduced as not to warrant this inference. / Moses was called to put *some* of his honour on Joshua. In truth, there arose no prophet or ruler like unto Moses till the Messiah appeared, superior to all; though Moses approached Him most nearly Joshua, however, was to have the benefit of a special communication with Heaven, through the priest asking counsel for him after the judgment of Urim.

NUMBERS XXVIII. 1-8.—There is first here a general order given for punctuality and care in the observation of the appointed offerings. Then follows a repetition of the law for particular offerings. The law of the daily burnt-offering is given over again with little variation from Ex. xxix. 38. One might conjecture from the recurrence made to this subject at the end of the journeying in the wilderness, that there may have been an intermission, or, at least, a partial neglect of these ritual observances from the time they were ordained in Mount Sinai. And there are passages elsewhere which might well warrant this inference, as Amos v. 25, when the prophet in the act of remonstrating and accusing puts the question, "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?"—which would imply that at least they had not done so fully and regularly. It is in the same spirit of expostulation and rebuke that this question of Amos is repeated by Stephen in the seventh chapter of the Acts.

9-15.—The Sabbath burnt-offerings, if I remember rightly, are recorded here for the first time—by which an addition is made to the daily offerings. A still larger addition is made to the offerings on the first day of the month. The Sabbath, and the new-moons thus signalized, are often mentioned in company together by the writers of the Old Testament. And it would appear from Amos viii. 5, that the day of the new-moon was, like Sabbath, made a day of exemption from ordinary work. The two are brought together as being alike a weariness to the profane and worldly—"When will the new-moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" The beginnings of months were

also signalized by the blowing of trumpets. The new-moon must have been like the Sabbath, too, in its being a day for consulting the men of God. (2 Kings iv. 23, &c.)

16-31.—This is not a repetition of the law of the Pass-over, by which a paschal lamb was offered on the fourteenth day of the first month; but they were the offerings to be made on each of the seven days of unleavened bread. I have yet to learn, however, whether, as the paschal lamb was an offering enjoined on the people at large, these and other offerings were also enjoined on them in like manner; and if so, must there not have been a limit to the number of households that could so offer, from the poverty of the humbler classes?—after which comes the question, where that limit was. In regard to the offering on the day of the first-fruits, it seems to be identical with, or at least close upon the offering prescribed in Lev. xxiii. 18. But still there is a variation in the particulars which are specified. Hence the conclusion of two offerings; and Poole on this passage says, that one offering did not give way because of another superinduced on it.

NUMBERS XXIX. 1-6.—The blowing of trumpets was instituted before so as to take place on the first day of the seventh month; (Lev. xxiii. 24;) but there is a filling up here which we have not there. In particular, we have the ordination of the sacrifices which were to be made upon that day. These are not made mention of at the first institution, but they are here specifically laid down. In the general, however, it is said in Leviticus that there shall be an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Here we are told what that offering, that burnt-offering, should particularly be, over and above which there was a sin-offering

prescribed to make atonement for them. It is to be remarked, that the offerings thus superinduced on certain days did not supersede other offerings which behoved to be made on these days at any rate, as here, in verse 6, we are told that the offerings for the first day of the month and the daily offerings which had been previously instituted were to go on as usual.

7-11.—The tenth day of the seventh month was the great day of atonement, the institution of which is set forth in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. There is no mention there made of sacrifices, which there is here. There is mention in both places of their afflicting their souls; but in this place additional offerings seem to be ordained. There was first a large burnt-offering of several animals, and which seems to have been for the purpose of a general atonement. This burnt-offering was for a sweet savour unto the Lord. But, over and above this, there was also a sin-offering enjoined in verse 11, as if to atone, not for sin in the general, but for the sins of that day's services—the sins of their holy things—for so imperfect are our repentance and faith, that in the actings even of these there is much to be expiated and much to be repented of. All that is enjoined here seems additional and supplemental to all that had been enjoined previously. It was all *beside* the sin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering of it and their drink-offerings.

12-34.—The fifteenth day of the second month was the beginning of the feast of tabernacles, (Lev. xxiii. 34,) and what was given in that passage in brief about the offerings made by fire seems here to be given in detail. The feast was for seven days, and for each day there was a certain

offering prescribed, with a particularity and a repetition which one is apt to think might have been spared; but which we are bound to acquiesce in as right and reasonable, whether we can divine the reasons or not. The obtuseness of the Jewish understanding might, for aught we know, have required it. Neither can we discover a principle for numbers, and the regular variation in the way of decrease on these numbers from day to day which appear to us altogether arbitrary. Nevertheless, they were determined by an All-wise Arbiter. There is one repetition saved or at least shortened, in that after the first day when the amount of flour for the meat-offering with each animal is specified, this is not told over again for each succeeding day, but expressed generally that it should be "after the manner." Again, however, we are told severally for each day that its distinct offerings were not to supersede the continual burnt-offering with its meat-offering and drink-offering.

35-40.—This great feast, the feast of booths or tabernacles, was concluded on the eighth day by a solemn convocation. There were peculiar sacrifices on this day, which like the former were not to supersede the ordinary routine sacrifices, or those that would otherwise have been made at any rate. But beside what may be called the statutory offerings at the set feast, there were also upon these occasions too, freewill-offerings and offerings in discharge of vows. We may well believe that at those great assemblages of the people, and more especially as they came together for a religious purpose, there would, under the impulse of such solemn occasions, be many voluntary gifts and services; and it is pleasing to observe how, under the Jewish economy, the legal and the voluntary



harmonized so beautifully together. It is to be presumed that the statutory sacrifice would be defrayed from a public fund, whether from the Levitical tithes or from what other source I am not aware—while all that was offered by vow or of freewill would be at the expense of the offerers.

NUMBERS XXX.—The general principle of this chapter is that it is better not to vow at all than to vow and not pay. The principles on which the exemptions from this obligation are founded are extremely interesting, and serve to prove that there is an authority in certain relationships to overrule what would otherwise be binding—a principle this which might perhaps be applied to the case of wives and daughters rendering certain conformities and compliances at the will of their natural superiors, from which otherwise and of their own will they should recoil as inexpedient at least, if not unlawful. There is great homage done here to the rightful authority of those who should bear rule over a household. The verses from 10 to 14 seem to apply to the case of a widow, or wife that is divorced—who also is exempted should her husband when living with her have disallowed her vows on the day that he heard of them—otherwise, even though she may have returned to her father's house, she is now responsible for all her vows. It would appear also, from verse 15, that he should disallow the vows on the day that he first heard of them—for if he defer this from day to day, holding his peace at her in the day that he heard them, her vows are confirmed—after which should he (verse 15) interpose and prevent the fulfilment, it is he and not she who shall bear the iniquity of their having been made void.

NUMBERS XXXI. 1-11.—Midian must have been somewhere contiguous to or intermixed with the land of Moab—a country of small population at all events, and I should not think of more than 128,000, if the females who were spared amounted to about one-fourth of the whole. This is inferior to the population of Fifeshire—so that the five kings, like the kings in Canaan, must have had very small kingships. Balaam being with the Midianites at the time of their overthrow does not prove, but makes it probable, that he may have belonged to this people.... The goodly castles here spoken of indicate the prevalence of war in those times.... The number of Israelites who went forth to the battle must have been considerably inferior to the number of people in Midian capable of bearing arms. But the Lord was on their side.

12-24.—It seems to have had much the character of a sacred war, in that it was a war of vengeance on the Midianites for seducing Israel to sin. And in keeping with this, Phinehas a priest, with the holy instruments, was sent forth upon it—nor do we read of the general Joshua. It is a war in which we behold the severity of an all righteous God; and Moses was wroth because it had not been made a war of total extermination. The women who were slain would necessarily include all the immediate transgressors with the children of Israel. Balaam was more signally and palpably an object of deserved vengeance than any of the others on whom it had been inflicted. His was indeed a most atrocious proceeding, after all the manifestations he had so recently gotten of the true God. One cannot imagine a more desperate iniquity than that any in his circumstances, and as a last expedient for frustrating the prophecies of which he had

been made the organ, should have counselled the seduction of the Israelites, in order to dis sever them from the favour and protection of God.... There was an act of purification prescribed here for those who had killed any one or touched the dead; and, as is often done, the occasion gave rise to an ordinance.

25-31.—The spoil that was to be divided consisted only of the men and the beasts that were taken, (verse 26;) for we do not read of any other spoil having been thus divided. A much larger share came to each of the few who went out to battle than to each of the many who remained in the camp. This was as it should be. Were the Levites included in the congregation? for if not, a much smaller share must have come to each of them than of the other tribes. If they did partake equally with the rest, and the five-hundredth part of the soldiers' half went to the priest, and the one-fiftieth of the congregation's half went to that portion of the Levites who had charge of the tabernacle, (verse 30,) this may have been a very liberal allowance to those who did the ecclesiastical work—though not certainly if it was all that went to the whole ecclesiastical body. Perhaps other parts of Scripture might throw light on this matter.

32-47.—Here follows the enumeration of the booty, in as far as it consisted of beasts and persons. I might have mentioned, in computing the whole population of the Midianites, from the description of women who were spared, that I should have recollected that it does not seem to have been a case of utter extermination, as the Midianites are afterwards mentioned in Scripture, and that, too, as a powerful nation. (Judges vi.)... Perhaps the allowance of booty to Eleazar and the Levites had respect only

to those of them who were employed in the service of this war, for Phinchas the son of Eleazar accompanied the army, as perhaps also did the tabernacle, of which certain of the Levites may have had the charge. There were holy instruments, at all events, employed on the occasion. The manner of dividing the booty in this instance is not followed up here by any recorded law, as the manner of purifying after the battle was, and which was proclaimed to be a general ordinance in all time coming.

48-54.—This was a most wondrous miracle, and well fitted to call forth the grateful emotions of those who stood indebted for their safety to an interposition so signal and marvellous. The feelings which prompted this acknowledgment were most natural, and yet highly creditable to the offerers. . . . Let it be observed here, that the various articles of gold which were taken in spoil were not made the subjects of that kind of division which took place in regard to the flocks and herds of the Midianites. The coming into possession of these was more a general consequent of victory upon the whole—whereas, in regard to such movables as are enumerated in verse 50, each might take of them, every man for himself; and each seems to have kept what he took. The presenting of these was a thank-offering—yet is said here to be for an atonement, though there could be no expiatory virtue in such an oblation.

NUMBERS XXXII. 1-5.—It is well to remark that Reuben and Gad were placed together under the same standard, and so had the opportunity of holding converse on their common concerns. There lies a deal of evidence in these minuter congruities. It may have been incidental,

these happening to have more cattle than the other tribes.

Having just read Robinson's Biblical Researches I feel much interested by all the geographical notices that are given in the Bible, and have great value for the coincidences which obtain between its statements and modern observation. I have not read any Travels on the east side of the Jordan, and would like to know if still the country there remains peculiarly adapted for the grazing of cattle. There is a Jelûd or Jelâd, a town on the east side of Jordan, but far north of Jericho originally—it is supposed to be the town of Gilead; and a Dhîbân further south; (Dibon;) and a Nimrîn in ruins; (Nimrah;) and the ruins of a Hesbân, (Heshbon,) and of an el-Al, (Elealeh,) and of a Neba, (Nebo.) See Index to Robinson, and the places there referred to.

6-19.—This proposition of the Reubenites and Gadites looked very ill on the first blush of it, and it accordingly calls forth a passionate remonstrance from Moses. It does not appear whether it had been the purpose of these tribes to remain behind, and that they were only forced to relinquish it by Moses' expostulation, or whether they really had intended *ab origine* to do as they professed in reply to the invective which had just been delivered in their hearing. If so nothing could be fairer; but this most essential condition should have been stated at the opening of the subject. . . . This Kadesh-barnea was, according to Robinson, N.N.E. from Petra, and yet near enough to it to have Mount Hor in sight. In his view of it the children of Israel were twice at Kadesh—that being the place from which they sent forth the spies, and the place also at which towards the close of the forty years they were, after a long interval, when they sent messengers to



Edom . . . . Eschol is understood to be the valley north of Hebron.

20-33.—Moses was pacified by the proposal, after he found it put by the Reubenites and Gadites into a reasonable form. Yet he does not seem altogether devoid of suspicion still—for he continues to conjure them; and as if it were possible that all was not right, he tells them that if they will not do as they profess, God will find them out. This more than anything else makes it doubtful whether they had been upright at the first in the overture which they made . . . . The expression of their being guiltless before the Lord and before Israel, suggests the distinction between our duty to God and our duty to man. The expression of their “going on before the Lord,” which casts up so frequently, marks the whole movement to be one ordered by Him who is the Lord of Hosts and who rules both in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world . . . . The half-tribe of Manasseh is here brought in for the first time. They are not stated to have been among the applicants. It is likely that Moses had seen prophetically what the extent of Canaan was to be—and that to proportion the shares rightly he took in the half-tribe of Manasseh—selecting them, it may be, for the greater number of cattle which belonged to them, or for being the likeliest circumstanced to the other two tribes . . . . It is a still more specific explanation of the expression, “before the Lord,” that according to the order of march the place of Reuben’s camp was immediately before the ark.

34-42.—Some of these names seem identical with those of verse 3, and are perhaps these somewhat changed. We have already stated in how far they have been identified,



or thought to be so, by modern travellers. Of the additional names put down here there is in the list of Robinson, Ar'ârah (Aroer.) . . . The children of Gad and Reuben must have built their cities after they had been put in possession . . . It does not appear whether Machir's conquest of Gilead took place after it had been allotted to him, or whether he was put in possession of it as the reward of his conquest. This would suggest a different reason from the one mentioned in the last section for the settlement of the half-tribe of Manasseh along with the two tribes of Gad and Reuben . . . What are now called the mountains of Gilead lie considerably to the north of Jericho. The present town of Jelûd or Jelâd is supposed to be identified by its name with the ancient town of Gilead. Kenath is in Robinson's list Kûnawât . . . The relationship of Jair to Manasseh is mentioned in other parts of Scripture.

NUMBERS XXXIII. 1-7.—This is one of the earliest, if not the earliest recorded instance of a commandment from God to His prophet not to speak but to write; and it is well to mark the importance thus given to the subject-matter of what was now to be written—a record of the journeys of the children of Israel—or what relates to the geography, which some would rank among the secularities of Scripture. There is a purpose to be served, we may assure ourselves, by these catalogues of names, whether of men or places, that occur so often in the Bible. It is well to trace the whole of this recorded movement in one of Robinson's maps; for although the precise locality of the crossing at the Red Sea is questioned, he has thrown great light on many of the passages in this great journey.

The situation of Rameses is a point pretty well ascertained, though not quite identified with Heroopolis. Succoth signifies booths. Etham, which was the edge of the wilderness, must have given its name to that wilderness, (verse 8,) which must have been therefore on the east side of the Red Sea, as the Israelites are represented as travelling through that wilderness after crossing the Red Sea. The wilderness, then, must have reached the head of the gulf of Suez, where the Israelites turned to the south and went along the west side of the gulf, and got entangled, according to Pharaoh's imagination, in the land. The precise localities of Pi-hahiroth, Baal-zephon, and Migdol, are unknown.

8-18.—Marah is the first place specified after their passage through the Red Sea. Marah is now, it is thought, Ain Hawârah, towards Sinai, but in the interior, and not along the shore. Elim is thought to be Wady Ghüründel. Thence they took to the coast, (verse 10,) at the mouth of Wady et-Taiyibeh. Thence to a plain along the Red Sea which extends nearly to the extremity of the peninsula, and which Robinson takes to be the desert of Sin. Horeb was the generic name of a range or cluster of hills. Sinai was one of these hills. At Rephidim they were near to some part of Horeb, while a day's journey from Sinai. The wilderness of Sinai seems to be the Wady er-Râhah. There seem also to have been two journeys from Sinai to Kadesh. The description of the first lies between Numbers x. 12, and Numbers xiv. 25. After the visit of the spies, they turned back and wandered thirty-eight years, when they again depart from the desert, and travel by the successive stages described in this chapter.

19-36.—I have found no guidance to the names which

follow till we come to Ezion-gaber, frequently noticed in Scripture, and placed at the head of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, or gulf of Akaba. In coming from Ezion-gaber to Kadesh they travelled northward, and towards the land of Canaan. But they were intercepted on this line by an unfriendly message from the king of Edom, and had to turn back to the Red Sea. (Num. xxi. 4; Deut. ii. 8.) . . . The wilderness of Zin is on the east side of the peninsula of Sinai, that of Sin being on the west side and along the Red Sea, or the plain between the shore and the mountains. The little tongue of land between the two gulfs at the head of the Red Sea has been the scene then of wonderful transactions—the selected arena for the wanderings of the children of Israel during forty years; and amid the recesses of which God may be said to have fixed on the spot where He lighted upon the world, and in the glorious manifestation of Himself held converse with the human species.

37-49.—Hor is authentically known as the hill at the base of which are the present ruins of Petra, and on the top of which, by constant and universal tradition, Aaron was buried—a tradition to be confidently relied on, however uncertain as to the precise site of the grave, or as to the architecture now named from the patriarch fixing the identical spot where his remains were interred. . . . Arad, a Caananite king in the south of that land, might well have heard of the approach of the hosts of Israel; for though not within his territory, they were not so far off as to be beyond the reach of hearsay. They had come from Ezion-gaber to Kadesh, and when refused a passage through their country by the Red Sea, they had to turn back to the Red Sea. Between Mount Hor and Zalmonah there

is an interval filled up in Deut. x. 6, 7, with intermediate halting-places not mentioned here in verse 41. But the name Mosera which stands for Mount Hor in Deuteronomy, seems the same with Moseroth in verse 30 here; and Jotbath in Deuteronomy seems the same with Jotbathah here. These places, then, may have been touched at twice—first on the march from Ezion-gaber to Kadesh, and then on the way back again. As to the remaining names all I can at present search out is a Dibon in the lists of Robinson, on the east of the Dead Sea, perhaps Dibon-gad. And Nebo may be the present Neba. There are some of these names to be found in other parts of Scripture.

50-56.—There is a great lesson to be drawn from this commission of God to Moses; not merely that all, even the least remainders of sin should be extirpated—so as that not one particle of the accursed thing should be tolerated—but that all remainders of temptation to sin should, as far as possible, be put forth, or kept at a most resolute distance away from us. In particular, we are here told of the extreme danger that there is in companying with the ungodly; and of the assiduous distance that we ought to maintain, so far as in us lies, from all that is charged with a worldly spirit, or that would expose us to the deadening influences of a worldly atmosphere. We must not tamper with the incitements to, or opportunities of sin. It is on the stepping-stone of fractional, which at the time did not appear to be formidable, hazards or liberties, that many a soul has been led into its own total and everlasting destruction; and this accords with the sad history of the Israelites, while it accounts for the woful defections and idolatries into which they fell .... The

order given by God for the total extermination of the Canaanites, when looked to in connexion with His character and ways, forms a distinct subject of reflection.

*February, 1843.*

NUMBERS xxxiv. 1-15.—The general boundary is here laid down of the land of Israel west of Jordan. The ascent of Akrabbim is understood to be the precipitous ledge which crosses the river that runs from the south into Jordan—across, in fact, the great strath of the Arabah, reaching from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea. One has a much more realizing conception of these boundaries by reading Robinson, though there be a number of names here to which his lists afford no guidance. I am not quite sure of the river of Egypt—which must have been somewhere in the quarter of Gaza. There is a mount Hor, in the north border of Canaan; Zedad is the present Sūdūd; (Ezek. xlvii. 15;) Hamath, Hamah; Riblah, Ribleh; (2 Kings xxiii. 33;) Ain, not of course the Ain of Judah. The Sea of Chinnereth the same with the Lake of Genesareth or Tiberias. The whole geographical outline is very distinct in its leading directions.... Does not the expression “toward the sun-rising,” (verse 15,) seem to import that the writer of this clause at least had had his homestead in Canaan proper?

16-29.—But the filling up of the enclosed space supplies a great many more points of comparison between the ancient and the modern geography. These we come to in the Book of Joshua, after the land was nearly conquered, and when the plan of its division among the tribes was laid down. But here we have the names of the dividers, who were appointed by the Lord before the

crossing of Jordan. Besides the general superintendence of the whole operation under the great military and ecclesiastical heads, Joshua and Eleazar, there was a man appointed for each tribe—ten princes for the nine and a half tribes, one of these being prince of the half-tribe of Manasseh on this side of Jordan. There seems to have been a tribal government as well as a general one in Israel, though we are not aware in detail of its distinct economy. The most illustrious of these names is that of the prince of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

NUMBERS xxxv. 1-8.—So that those cities may be called aggregates of manses, the stipends being in tithe, and the glebes outside of the city suburbs. It is interesting to observe the Divine sanction for these various provisions in the maintenance of ecclesiastical men and their families. The tone of society in these cities of the Levites must have been distinct from that of other places—literary and ecclesiastical. They do not seem to have had lands for cultivation, but rather for pasturage only and food to their cattle. The suburbs without the wall were probably all occupied with outhouses for the accommodation of the cattle and their keepers, and for the storing of their goods.... The two thousand cubits seem to have been exterior to the suburbs—though there are different views entertained of this.... The cities of refuge have been represented as typical of Christ; and whether so or not, are at least illustrative of the safety which believers have in Him.... The burden of this provision, that is, of dwelling-places for the Levites, was divided proportionally among all the tribes.



9-21.—The killing must be at unawares, else there is no city of refuge for him. And there are sins for which there is no atonement. He that sinneth wilfully—*εκουσιω*;—for him there is no more sacrifice for sin. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. ix. 6.) See also 1 John iii. 15. This seems decisive against those who hold all capital punishments to be unlawful.... The word for revenger might also be redeemer, and was also equivalent to *propinquus*—the nearest of blood; because such was the redeemer of his relative's property, and also the avenger of his blood. It is a striking demonstration of the unpardonable guilt of murder, that the nearest relative of the slain was authorized to inflict the punishment by his own hand. (verses 19-21.) But it must be at his own peril. He must be able to establish the guilt of the person he has thus executed—for in doubtful cases the judges interposed, and passed sentence only on a certain amount of evidence. Some of the cases in which the revenger was at liberty to take the life of the murderer are here enumerated, and they are such as clearly prove a malice prepense—a sinning wilfully.... It is remarkable that the same number of cities should be given to each side of Jordan; but there was no great difference in the longitudinal extent of the two portions. It is not without its meaning, that all these cities of refuge were Levites' cities.

• 22-34.—There follow here cases of unintentional manslaughter, for which these cities of refuge were provided. It seems somewhat difficult to understand that there should have been even the lesser penalty of confinement to one of these cities, if it were clearly established that there was no enmity. On the whole, however, the law might have

induced a greater carefulness of each other's persons, and operated as a voluntary restraint on the sallies of passion. And besides, it provided for all doubtful cases, such as might awaken purposes of retaliation on the part of the avenger. When the innocence was perfectly clear, then there might be no danger of vengeance at his hands, in which case perhaps the flight to a city of refuge was dispensed with—its great design being to save the unwilling man-slayer from the hand of the avenger.... The death of the High Priest, which released the man-slayer from his confinement, has been made typical of the death of Christ, by which we are discharged from the guilt and punishment of all our trespasses. Both the greater penalty for murder, and the lesser for man-slaughter, as put forth in this chapter, evince how peremptory the Divine law is on the matter of shedding man's blood.

NUMBERS XXXVI.—Here is another example, where, instead of legislation providing for a case, it is the case which suggests the legislation, that ought to be progressive like other things, ere it is perfected, and so as solidly to rest on an experimental basis. They were the same individuals too, the daughters of Zelophehad, who gave occasion to both cases—in the first instance at their own suit, and by which they were constituted the heirs of their property on there being no sons in their family—in the second instance, at the suit of the tribe to which they belonged, and on which it was ordained that they should not marry out of their own tribe—and this in order to prevent the alienation or breaking up of the integrity of the landed property assigned severally to each of the tribes. Within their own tribe they might marry to whom they thought

best. There is an homage here rendered to the feelings of female preference, and yet a limitation prescribed to it also. They might marry to whom they thought best within that limit ; but yet their preference must give way before the public object of keeping entire the landed possession of each tribe.

### DEUTERONOMY.

DEUTERONOMY I. 1-7.—I am not able so to weigh either Robinson on verse 1, or the Pictorial Bible on verses 1, 2, as to adjust their geographical notices in a way satisfactory to myself.... This sublime recital of Moses to the children of Israel, gives to the book which contains it a high place among the compositions of Scripture. It was on the eve of the expiry of forty years after their departure from Egypt, that it was delivered in the hearing of the people.... Edrei is in Robinson's lists as being the same with Edhra.... I cannot say that I am at all satisfied with Professor Hengstenberg's explanation of the plain over against the Red Sea, as given by Robinson.... Moses, it is said, began to declare this law, and doubtless there is a record of many enactments in the book of Deuteronomy ; but besides this, there is narrative or history.... The command given in Horeb was to march forthwith to Canaan and take possession of it. It is remarkable that the order of the journey, if it were to quadrate with the enumeration of the places in verse 7, would have led to a progress of invasion the reverse of what took place—that is, from the sea-side eastward, instead of through Jordan westward. There is not much, however, in this observation.

8-18.—That was a memorable passage in the history now recited, when Moses devolved on subordinate rulers as much as he could resign himself of the weight and care of his government—a lesson to those fanatical and heedless zealots who would accumulate all sorts of burden and duty upon one man, and then tell him—As thy day is thy strength shall be. Moses, gifted and aided as he was by supernatural power, did not feel himself independent of human helps; and let therefore adequate agencies and adequate instrumentalities be provided to the uttermost when any great work requiring a large and manifold co-operation is to be performed.... How beautifully the parenthetical blessing comes in here, and how it must have softened any ungraciousness that might otherwise have been felt in the succeeding complaint of his inability to bear their cumbrance and their strife.—Save me, O God, from the respect of persons—save me from the fear of man. And give me wisdom for hard cases; and to both myself and others give strength for hard work.

19-33.—Moses' description of the great and terrible wilderness corresponds well with its present character as described by travellers.... I am glad that the position of Kadesh-barnea and other points of geographical reference are so well fixed in my mind by Robinson's book. I can follow the route from Kadesh to Eshcol.... Moses deals freely in this narrative with the children of Israel—not surely like an impostor, who wanted to preserve his ill-gotten ascendancy over them, but quite in the tone and with the conscious authority of a prophet, who felt himself to be commissioned from on high. He tells them fully and broadly of their rebellion, and the perversity of

their conduct. He rates them for their unbelief, verse 32, analogously to what the Apostle in the Hebrews says—"So they could not enter in because of their unbelief." It was unbelief, certainly, in the face of signal manifestations—of which are specified here, the fire by night and the cloud by day. It was a truly astonishing display of human perverseness—yet we are not entitled to think or to say that ourselves would not have made the like exhibition in the like circumstances.

34-46.—The anger of God was commensurate to these aggravations; and then followed the terrible sentence of confinement to the wilderness till the grown-up generation had disappeared.—Give me, O Lord, in imitation of Caleb, to follow Thee wholly .... "The Lord was angry with me for your sakes"—that is, because of their provocations, Moses had been tempted to such an utterance as brought down upon him, too, the general interdict .... Joshua was to be Moses' substitute. The ways of God are not as man's ways; and in that the young of whom the rebellious Israelites complained that they their little ones were to perish in the wilderness—they were to experience the direct reverse of this anticipation; and they alone were to have entry into the land of Canaan .... The host was commanded to return by the way of the Red Sea; and I should imagine south from Kadesh to the gulf of Akaba. The Israelites, however, at first disregarded this order and suffered for it; and the result strikingly marks the difference that there is between a man being exposed to the dangers of a situation into which he has been brought by the will of God, and his being exposed to the very same dangers because he has presumptuously put himself into the very same situation against or without God's will.



DEUTERONOMY II. 1-7.—My understanding of the geography here is this: The congregation turned from Kadesh on the west of Mount Seir southward to the gulf of Akaba, and so compassed in part, or lay along the boundary of the Edomites, who inhabited Mount Seir, many days. Then in turning northwards they passed along the west, I should think, of the plain of Arabah, but so as at length to require that they should penetrate Mount Seir, which in my apprehension lay to the east of Arabah.... They were thwarted in this attempt by the Edomites, of whom God had charged them, that they should offer no violence against them, or even enter their territory without their consent.... How long, during these forty years, they encamped along the confines of Mount Seir, or how much of this time they spent in travelling up and down through the wilderness, is not apparent. But that they did so traverse the desert, that they were not stationary all the while but locomotive, is evident not only from the records of their journeys, but might have been gathered from what is here said—"He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee."

8-18.—I understand that the Israelites rounded the territory of Edom by the head of the gulf of Akaba, and passed along their eastern limit till they got into contact with Moab, on the south-east of the Salt Sea. They were to have respect to the Moabites as to the Edomites, and on the same principle too—that is, because of their consanguinity. It is interesting to mark how, in the Divine economy, children are identified with parents—whether we look to the relation in which all mankind are made to stand to Adam, or to the consideration in which



particular nations are held because of their ancestors. It is also of great historic interest, as well as in itself a large and sublime contemplation, to look at the successive national dynasties, if they may be so called, which followed each other in the same region, to pass upwards from the antiquity of the Moabites and Edomites to the still higher antiquity of the Anakims and Emims and Horims, of which last we have still a vestige in the name of Mount Hor.... Robinson's hypothesis of the children of Israel having been twice at Kadesh helps greatly to elucidate their movements.

19-37.—The Ammonites were farther north than the Moabites; but one might conjecture from the remonstrance of Jephthah, in the eleventh chapter of Judges, that the Amorites had dispossessed the Ammonites of part at least of their territory, which part Israel won from them and claimed as their own by the right of conquest. After which I understand that the Ammonites occupied the region to the east of Gilead.... The parenthetic sentences give another view of the succession of national dynasties—letting us back into history older than that which is passing before us. A demonstration was given of the true God to the people whom Israel invaded and dispossessed; and some, as the Gibeonites, by giving way to the fear of Him, were saved from at least utter destruction. In verse 29, the example of the Edomites and Moabites is quoted to enforce the request made of Sihon—though the Edomites refused a passage to the children of Israel. There are methods of escaping from this difficulty. They may have refused at first and consented afterwards; or they allowed the Israelites a quiet passage along their confines without molesting them; or they may have bought and

sold with them. Yet this last the Moabites refused. (Deut. xxiii. 3, 4.) There was this difference, however, in the conduct of the Israelites towards these people: They gave way to the refusal of the Edomites and Moabites; but visited that of the Amorites with a signal vengeance.... The analogy is striking here to God's subjective dealings with Pharaoh in his dealings with Sihon. The Israelites did not touch the land then possessed by the Ammonites; but there is ground for thinking that the land they did win from the Amorites, whom they exterminated, was originally wrested by them from the children of Ammon.

DEUTERONOMY III. 1-17.—I desiderate the geography of this chapter too; and shall henceforth consider a good Scripture Geography as a most useful help to the comprehension of many narratives in the Bible.... These names surely must determine the relative localities of the Amorites and the Bashanites. Though Sihon be called king of the Amorites, he is likewise called king of Heshbon; and though Og be called king of Bashan, he too, it is presumed, and his subjects were Amorites—the two together making the two kings of the Amorites in verse 8.... The children of Ammon may have got Og's bedstead in spoil when these people were at war.... The half-tribe of Manasseh's portion seems to have been the extreme north of the Israelitish territory on the east of Jordan; which portion was subdivided between its two great families—those of Jair and Machir.... Some think that the latter clause of verse 14 is an addition made by Ezra—as if the duration of the name unto this day indicated a long lapse of time. The sixteenth verse, however, is evidently written in the name of Moses and by Moses.

18-29.—Moses here repeats the charge formerly given to the two and a half tribes. They were to pass over armed before the others, though it does not appear here that this inferred their order of march being at all different from what is assigned in the second chapter of the book of Numbers.

He then tells his words of encouragement to Joshua, and his own earnest request, proffered with expressions of deep piety, that God would let himself pass over and have a view of the goodly land.... It does not seem clear which mountain is referred to in verse 25, unless the clause runs thus, "That goodly mountain, even Lebanon." God's being wroth with Moses for their sakes, may signify that His anger was excited by what Moses had said or done in his strivings with the children of Israel. The peremptory way in which God abides by the sentence which in this instance had gone forth of His mouth, impresses the lesson that He is not to be mocked. "He hath said it, and shall He not do it?"

DEUTERONOMY IV. 1-14.—Moses proceeds from narrative to deliver a solemn and earnest exhortation.—The days were when the direct influence of such Old Testament addresses on the side of obedience was deafened to my ear by the imagination of an old Covenant, and the fear lest by giving way to the obvious effect of such addresses, I was violating the orthodoxy of the New Testament, and allowing the legal to carry it over the evangelical. This influence still lingers with me; but surely there is a perversity therein from which I long to be emancipated—that I may run with alacrity in the new obedience of the Gospel, and have the comfort of knowing that my labour in the Lord

is not in vain. O that I were delivered from all which is calculated to freeze up the activities of my nature, and to restrain the free and fearless, and let me add, hopeful consecration of all my services and all my powers to Him who poured out His soul unto the death—and this to purify a people unto Himself, zealous of good works. O that my light may shine before men; and that men might recognise in the followers of Jesus who call on the name of the Lord, that with them indeed there is true wisdom, and in the worth and excellence of their character the only elements of true greatness. I pray for my country, that the righteousness which exalteth a nation may be theirs—and I pray also for my children, that I may bring them up in the holy admonition of the Lord.

15-24.—There were smoke and thunder and a voice heard from the top of Mount Sinai; but there was no visible form—and this is urged as an argument against that sin against which the Scriptures lifted a continuous protest. Christ says of the Father, (John v. 37,) “Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.” But here the Israelites heard a voice from Sinai; and is not this too an argument that it was Christ Himself who stood on Sinai and spoke on that day? ... Mark here, that the covenant is said to be even the ten commandments—yet not on that account necessarily a pure covenant of works... What a difference between one sort of idolatry and another, between the deification of insects and that of the luminaries on high—yet the same essential idolatry in both.... The expression of “taking them out of the iron furnace” is employed too by Jeremiah. (ch. xi. 4.) What a grievous discomfort the brick-making must have been in that hot climate.... The subordination of the greatest created things

to Him who created them is well marked out in verse 19. The Lord thy God hath spread out these as the Disposer and Superior of them, for the good of all nations.... The making of a graven image or a likeness is singled out as a most glaring infraction of the covenant.... That our "God is a consuming fire" is affirmed under the Old and repeated under the New dispensation. (Heb. xii. 29.)

25-40.—In this truly impressive charge of Moses to the children of Israel, his chief aim is to keep them from the great master-sin to which, from their frequent lapses, there must have been a great master-temptation—the sin of idolatry. And his threats turned out to be prophecies: The people were carried to other lands, where, in the service of the gods of strange countries and people, they may be said to have been filled with the fruit of their own ways. And disclosure is made here, too, of the goodness as well as the severity of God. He will not keep His anger for ever, but keeps Himself open to the return of the penitent. This is exemplified in the future history of this people, whose worst rebellions did not obliterate the respect which God had to the covenant made with their fathers.... That was truly a miracle worthy of being singled out from all others, in an age which teemed with them—the voice of God from heaven heard out of the midst of the great fire kindled upon earth on the top of Sinai. The stupendous things done in Egypt, and on their journey to the borders of the promised land, might well have guaranteed both their hopes of His protection and their fear of His threatenings; and convinced them that, whether for good or for evil, God, in whose hands all power lay, was indeed the Being with whom they had to do.

41-49.—Moses here carries into effect what had been

before instituted—the appointment of cities of refuge for the man-slayer. He only fixed on the three cities which were to the east of Jordan. The other three were not determined till the conquest and division of the land of Canaan had taken place.

It does not seem clear whether the law and the testimony and the statutes, the recital of which is spoken of in verses 44, 45, refer to what he had said in the previous chapters of Deuteronomy, or to what is said more explicitly, and at greater length, in the succeeding chapters; more probably the latter. At all events, the locality of both recitals is minutely enough described—as being on the east side of Jordan, which Moses was not permitted to cross.... There are good materials in this brief passage for a geographical investigation; and with the help of Robinson and other travellers, we have no doubt that some points could be satisfactorily determined.

DEUTERONOMY v. 1-5.—In ch. xxix. 1, Moses seems to take a retrospective view of the words delivered by him from this point to that, and says,—“These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses.” And he instances of this covenant that it is distinct from the one made at Horeb. Here again he addresses the people as if they had been present at Horeb; but this could only apply to those about or above forty, and who must have been mere youths or children at that time. None under forty could have been present, or, if so, could have had the recollection of the time when the Lord talked from Mount Sinai, and the people were afraid by reason of the fire. Therefore, when he says that the covenant at Horeb was “with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this



day," he signifies that its obligations were not only laid upon their fathers, but reached to them also.

6-21.—Here follows a repetition of the Decalogue. Even the minute variations from the first record of it are worthy of being noticed. At the commencement of the Sabbath law, in verse 12, there is a reference to the former giving of this commandment; but is there not also a reference to past obligation in Ex. xx. 8, where we are to *remember* the Sabbath day, whereas here we are told to keep the Sabbath, as had already or before been commanded to us? The reason of one part of the law is beautifully given here, which is not in the recorded promulgation from Mount Sinai—"that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou." But there is a still wider diversity in what immediately follows. The general ground or reason of the law, as taken from the history of creation, is here altogether omitted. But the consideration of domestics and inferiors is tenderly and impressively urged on the children of Israel, by a reference to their state of servitude in the land of Egypt, from which they had been rescued by God, who brought them thence by might and by miracles. The same compassion which prompted to the deliverance of these wretched bondsmen from the land of their oppression, prompts also a regard to the ease and refreshment of all those who are in a state of servitude throughout the family of mankind. There is also a reference to the commandment having previously been given in the repetition here of the fifth; and there is, too, the additional clause of "its going well with thee," which clause is admitted into Eph. vi. 3. There is a larger specification of the particular objects of covetous desire in the tenth commandment here than in Exodus. The neighbour's

field and house are instanced additionally in this place; but the generalizing clause is equally comprehensive in both—being alike interdicted in each from coveting anything that is thy neighbour's.

22-33.—How it signalizes the Decalogue when we are told, as in verse 22, that after God had made utterance of the ten commandments from the top of Sinai "He added no more." Let it ever be recollected that the Sabbath law in particular was thus signalized, and had its place, too, in the tables of stone, along with the unchangeable and everlasting moralities on both sides of it.... The effect of so near a manifestation of the Divinity on the minds of the people, should perhaps reconcile us to our present state of dimness and distance from the lively and spiritual apprehension of God. A nearer view of our Heavenly Father is much to be aspired after; but He deals out to us our measures of illumination as seemeth unto Him best; and, meanwhile, without remitting our diligence in the work of seeking after God, and stirring ourselves up to lay hold of Him, let us give all diligence to the plain work of the commandments. And what a mighty impulse to this course is the utterance in verse 29,—“Oh that there were such an heart in them, and that they would keep my commandments alway.”—My God, incline and enable me thus to do; and as the fruit of my obedience may I experience the manifestations of Thy countenance, O God.

DEUTERONOMY VI. 1-9.—There is a spiritualization of the commandment in this recital by Moses which one does not so fully recognise in the preceding deliveries of the law. The law of love, the first and greatest commandment, is directly put forth by him. There is something, too, like

a recognition of the heart as the seat of all virtue; and what is particularly valuable and impressive, is the charge here given for a sedulous family instruction in the matters of God and of religion. There should be no intermission of this work. It should mingle with every occasion of our history; and O my God, forgive my past deficiencies, and help me in all time coming to keep this injunction which Thou hast delivered by the mouth of the Hebrew lawgiver—that I may diligently teach my children. And in what a striking way, too, is there here set before us the duty of a perpetual reference to God's will, and of holding His law in our perpetual remembrance. What a lesson to make a current work of our sanctification. O my God, do Thou leaven my whole habits with godliness; and may a sense of God and His will give the colour and the direction to every footstep of my history.

10-25.—There is an appropriate solemnity and earnestness in this charge of Moses to the children of Israel, now on the eve of possessing the land of their future habitation. After pressing on them the general duty of obedience, he makes special reference to the temptations which await them in the country they are about to settle in—temptations to the forgetfulness of God, and to the idolatry which was everywhere around them. No doubt his experience of their former perversities would make him all the more intent and energetic in the warnings which he now gave them. He alludes to one of these perversities recorded in Exodus xvii. 7. By the duteous observance of one direction here given—that is, for parents to tell their children of the wondrous events which preceded their settlement in Canaan—we doubt not that a firmer pathway of tradition was raised for the safe and accurate

transmission of the narrative from generation to generation than ever obtained in any other nation—and all this additional to the testimony of their written records.

*March, 1843.*

DEUTERONOMY VII. 1-11.—The proper names of Scripture serve to concatenate the different periods of sacred history:—compare the list of the nations as given here with the list in Gen. xv. 19-21, and still earlier with the genealogies of the family of Ham, in Gen. x., as the Canaanites from Canaan his fourth son, and the Hittites from Heth, the second son of Canaan, and so of others in Gen. x. 15-17. We learn from this passage the danger of exposure to or intercourse with the least remainder or fragment of what is evil, more particularly if it is by our own sufferance or choice that we have come into contact with it. The utter destruction of the Canaanites seems to have been indispensable to the moral safety of the children of Israel, and to the maintenance of their character as a holy people. . . . We are here also presented with an example of God's prior and electing love; and likewise of the respect which He bore to people because of their ancestors, extending the obligation of his covenant from father to children, or identifying as it were a man and his posterity into one and the same corporate body—dealing with His creatures generically as well as individually, or in groupes and families as well as in unity. From this anterior disposition on the part of God there is made to flow, as if in subordination thereto, a counterpart duty on the part of man—"Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments," &c. Let this be my practical lesson, grounded on the love of God to me in Christ Jesus.

11-26.—It is worthy of all notice, that the counterpart to God's keeping the covenant of mercy is the obedience of the Israelites. Let not a perverse orthodoxy so mislead me as to the mercy of the Gospel that I should not see clearly and directly the counterpart of obedience which is required of all who name the name of Christ. Let me also notice the temporal character of the sanctions which are here introduced.... It is a most instructive lesson that we may draw from the order given to the children of Israel for a relentless extermination of their enemies. Let me not only not spare my sins, but unsparingly as far as I may cut off the occasions of sin, resolutely shunning all temptation whenever I can duteously retire from or do away the circumstances which give it birth. He speaks as if the eyes of those whom he was addressing had seen the miracles of Egypt. This holds true only of a fraction. But the tradition was too near and overpowering not to make it an argument which should have been resistless with all. Though God says, in Lev. xxvi. 6, that He would rid them of evil beasts, this does not say but that He would do it with regard to the laws and ordinary processes of nature, or by such precautions as He calls on the Israelites to observe in this passage. The utter extirpation of all that might be an occasion or provocative to evil is a lesson never to be forgotten.

DEUTERONOMY VIII. 1-10.—Mark here the lengthened periods of God's probation. He kept the Israelites in the wilderness to prove what was in their hearts; and who knows how long the Church of Scotland is to be kept in a wilderness state, ere the moral and providential designs of God shall be accomplished.... Every passage in the Old



Testament is signalized by its being made the subject of a quotation in the New, as the fourth verse was in the great temptation of our Saviour.... What a striking, but all the less striking it is to be feared because it was a standing miracle, is the duration of their garments for forty years! This and many other miracles equally stupendous, were all withstood by them.... Moses here points out the meaning of the hardships they had undergone: They were chastenings for sin; and he here employs them as arguments for their future obedience. He then expatiates on the goodness of the land; and from his reference to their future multiplication in verse 1, it would appear that they were yet by much too few to occupy it fully—which might be one explanation of the beasts multiplying in the land, were the Canaanites not to be exterminated gradually.

11-20.—Moses continues his importunities, and with all the earnestness suited to a great commencement of a new and great era, even the entrance of the Israelites on a land where they were to be settled and subsist for many generations. The danger was, that in the day of prosperity they should forget; and to fortify them against this, he reminds them of their helpless state in the great and terrible wilderness, where they were sustained directly and visibly by the power and liberality of God. Instead of this, they were to be translated into a land of great sufficiency and fulness; and where they would be apt to stop short at second causes, and be lifted up by a vain confidence in their own wealth—forgetting Him who giveth the power to get wealth. He fed them in the wilderness at first hand, as it were, that they might be made humbly to feel their dependence; and, at all events,



whatever impression the discipline of the wilderness might have had upon them, it would make manifest of what spirit they themselves were. And it was fitted to do them this good at the latter end, and after it had all gone by—to keep them from arrogant self-confidence, and cause them to remember their dependence on God, who, not for their sakes, but from respect to the Covenant made with their fathers, placed them in so rich an inheritance. . . . The chapter concludes with the voice of warning and menace.

DEUTERONOMY IX. 1-10.—“This day” means at this time—not long after this . . . . It is the practice in the East still to fortify their towns by very lofty walls . . . . Moses takes care to guard his countrymen against the imagination of their own merit in being so privileged: It was not because of their own righteousness, but because of God’s own oath to their fathers—not therefore for their sake, but for His own sake that He conferred such blessings and distinctions upon them. To check the vanity of any presumption opposite to this, he sets before them the story of their own rebellions; and the frankness and fearfulness of these his recorded charges, so discreditable to the people who heard them at the first, and also to the nation which preserved the written narrative of its own disgrace, have often and justly been appealed to as evidence both to Moses being a true character, and also to the faithful transmission of the annals which he left behind him from ancient to modern times . . . . The sustenance of Moses’ life without food for forty days and nights, was one of the many miracles of that age of extraordinary manifestations.

11-29.—Moses continues in this passage his rehearsal of the rebellions of the Israelites, of which their worship of the molten calf, in which they were headed by Aaron, was perhaps the most monstrous and unnatural of them all. The reaction produced by it in the mind of Moses might well be understood, and also the displeasure which it kindled in the bosom of the Almighty. It would appear that Moses underwent another miraculous fast on this occasion, of the same length as the former. No wonder either, that Aaron is here singled out as the object of a special resentment. Some might think that he also fasted forty days and nights at Kadesh-barnea; but this is not said in verse 25, as in verses 9 and 18.... It is interesting to find out analogies in God's providential dealings, that serve to illustrate or confirm any great doctrines in Theology. The miseries entailed by Adam on his posterity, are of a piece with those innumerable instances wherein children suffered by the misconduct of parents; and Moses' prayer for the Israelites, with his plea for the enforcement of it, grounded on God's remembrance of their progenitors, bears in it an analogy to our prayer lifted up in the name of Him who is held forth as the great object of faith, both to ourselves and to him also who was the father of the faithful.

DEUTERONOMY x. 1-5.—The interesting thing recorded here respecting the two tables, is their deposition in the ark of the testimony. By this time the tabernacle had been set up, and Moses appeals to the place which they occupied at the time he was speaking to the children of Israel—even the ark. We have also pretty distinct intimations of certain of the Sacred Writings having been deposited

there; and had this been the general method with them all, we cannot imagine a more incorrupt and authentic method for the transmission of books of authority from one generation to another. The tables of the covenant are enumerated by Paul (Heb. ix. 4) among other things laid up in the ark—but not the sacred or canonical books. It is the opinion of many, however, that they were all lodged either in or beside the ark as a crypt; and thence those books which, though held in great estimation, were not so signalized are termed “apocryphal.” From this passage, taken singly, it would appear that the second tables as well as the first were written by the hand of God Himself. What a relict, what a memorial of the living God, for any people to have possessed!

6-22.—He resumes the narrative; and states the place where Aaron died, as also the separation of the Levites to the peculiar services of the Hebrew Church.... The provocation and the prayer adverted to in verse 10, looks to me very like what took place at Kadesh-barnea; and seems altogether distinct from the analogous things which took place at Mount Sinai.... What an earnestness of moral suasion does Moses put forth in the beautiful and impressive verses which close this chapter. And what an advance, too, in the character of spirituality which belongs to these his closing admonitions—from walking in the ways of the Lord to loving Him (verse 12)—from the literal circumcision to circumcision of the heart (verse 16)—from service to strangers to the love of strangers. There is an elevated piety in the whole spirit and scope of these sentences, and resting on a basis of gratitude to Him which should have irresistibly told on the feelings of the Israelites, both for their wondrous increase and wondrous preservation.

DEUTERONOMY XI. 1-9.—The love is here made, as in our own more enlightened dispensation, to go before the obedience: This is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments—the one being the necessary effect and criterion of the other.... Moses, though not speaking to those who did not know, yet was speaking to very many of those who had not seen part at least of what he here recites—the miracles and acts which God did in the midst of Egypt. But they lived near enough to be perfectly assured of them; and all who were above fifty might have recollected all. And the eyes of most of them had seen what was done to Dathan and Abiram. And surely they had encouragement enough in committing themselves to the protection of Him who had thus manifested His chastisements and His terrors to both His and their enemies. But their strength lay in their obedience; and Moses' charge was that they should keep the commandments of the Lord in order to their being strong and taking possession of the land.

10-21.—The distinction between Egypt and Palestine was highly fitted to impress the Israelites with the care of that God who sends rain from heaven and fruitful seasons. It would have somewhat the effect of a miracle at first, though this would soon subside when the extraordinary character of the process went off, and was at length transmuted to their eyes into one of the common laws of nature. The water which fertilized their fields, as coming from the heavens, would at first be regarded as coming from God—when instead of being distributed by the foot of man, as in conducting the irrigations of the Nile, it came in a universal shower from the sky. It would impress them as being indeed a land which the Lord cared for—an impression blunted by experience, but not most

certainly by experience turned to a right or rational account. Still, however, the Theocracy was vindicated by promises and the fulfilments of promises. The supply both of the first and the latter was made to hinge on their obedience—so that if they declined to idolatry the heaven was to be shut up, and the land to be visited with barrenness. Under these sanctions they were charged to a constant observation of God's law.—O that I could mould my habit into a conformity with those directions which point out a thorough leavening of the whole life and history with religion, and more especially the close and habitual converse on this greatest of topics with my children. This were indeed a heaven upon earth. My God, help and encourage me.

22-32.—The pleading earnestness of Moses is sustained throughout. It does not appear to me that the extent of country which he promises has ever yet been realized. There is, I think, a coming fulfilment of the possession by Israel, from Euphrates to the Great Sea. It is truly interesting to be furnished with such distant glimpses of a geography still extant—as the Nile, and the Euphrates, and the Mediterranean, which still preserve their identity with the rivers and seas of so remote an antiquity.... I know not how the ultra-evangelical feel on the blessing and the curse being set before the people as two distinct alternatives dependent on their conduct. Sure I am, that there is an orthodoxy so put as to deafen the practical impression of this.—My God, give me the comfort of knowing that my labour in the Lord is not in vain. ... I regret that I have not Robinson by me, who has verified, I think, both Ebal and Gerizim; for both Gilgal and Moreh would supply points for an interesting comparison.

DEUTERONOMY XII. 1-12.—Moses reiterates the lessons wherewith his heart is full, and dwells with specialty and emphasis on their destruction of all the vestiges of idolatry in the land on which they were entering—demolishing all its high places, which seem to have been selected either for their eminence or their beauty, which might dispose the Israelites to spare them, but which nevertheless they were utterly to exterminate with ruthless and unsparing hand. And while thus destroying all the houses and monuments of the false gods, they were told that they must do otherwise by the true God, and build for Him a holy habitation. One likes to observe the rejoicing that here is made to stand associated with the true worship; and surely there is a want of right faith and understanding when there is not a cheerful religion. When it is said that every man did whatsoever was right in his own eyes, it means, I apprehend, that they performed their sacrifices and their ritual observances without much regard to place, even though they had the tabernacle in the midst of them; but that it was not to be so after the tabernacle had been erected in the land, or at least after the erection of the temple. It is interesting to observe how the Levite is included in the bidden festivities, which, having no part or inheritance such as they had, he was made generally to partake of by the hospitalities of his countrymen.

12-25.—From Lev. xvii. 3, 4, we learn that the people behoved to bring every animal slain for food to the door of the tabernacle; but in the land of Canaan the temple or tabernacle was too far from the great bulk of the families, and so a license is granted in verses 15, 20, 21, to slay and eat without any such obligation as they were laid under in the wilderness.... The prohibition against the



use of blood is here repeated, as are all the other injunctions on which the greatest strength or importance was laid. Certain things, however, as tithes and offerings, could only be eaten in the place which the Lord should choose; and all had the opportunity of doing so at the great periodical convocations which were held there. The duty of kindness to the Levites is strongly inculcated.—Grant, O Lord, that the spirit of liberality to our ecclesiastics may be revived in this land; but more earnestly still do we ask that Thou wouldest give firmness of principle to these ecclesiastics, that they may be prepared to suffer all rather than renounce their fidelity to Christ and to His truth.

26-32.—This charge sometimes descends to particular observances, and at others is most impressively general on the side of obedience at large, or the one duty and principle of allegiance to God and of respect for His will—as “observe to do whatsoever things I have commanded you.” It is well to take a note of the things which are specialized—such as here the abstinence from blood, the restrictions of their sacrifices and offerings to the holy place, which should afterwards be appointed; but, most emphatically of all, the avoidance or rather the destruction of all that could tempt them to idolatry in the land of their settlement. This proneness to idolatry is a remarkable phenomenon in the moral history of these people, and not the less so that it seems to have had its periods. From the time of Moses to the Babylonish captivity the tendency to lapse into idolatry was perpetual, and the powerful dissuasives of the Jewish Lawgiver intended to restrain this, failed of success. After the Babylonish captivity, the tendency seems to have disappeared.

DEUTERONOMY XIII.—Here there is the assertion of an evidence and authority in the doctrine as delivered by Moses, which should prevail over the impression of what may be called a miracle—a miracle of knowledge at least, being the fulfilment of a prophecy. On this matter we may be assured that God would not suffer them to be tempted beyond what they ought to resist; and that, in like manner, as we are told that the re-appearance of men from the dead has not a greater power to convince than the writings of Moses and the prophets—so it follows that any miracle short of this ought not to seduce the Israelites from a faith resting on the foundation of their own oral and written tradition, as well as on the providences and manifestations which themselves might see. In like manner, as the rod of Aaron swallowed up the rods of the magicians, and thus vindicated the authority of the mission from the true God, so the Israelites in the collective evidence of their Scriptures and their accumulated experiences, had enough to absorb the mischief and defeat the machinations of all false prophets and pretenders. . . . What fearful sanctions against idolatry are here established, proving the fearful guilt of it. Men are required to proceed against it with un pitying heart and relentless hand, even to the death of their nearest relatives, and to which all the people too were made to lend their counsel and help, and to exterminate whole cities if tainted with the evil.

DEUTERONOMY XIV. 1-20.—There was reason in itself for the first prohibition of this chapter; but that the object of it was partly for the separation by distinct practices from the surrounding nations, seems plainly intimated in

verse 2, that they were to be a holy people unto God, and peculiar, and above all others. In the following verses this separation seems to be the main, if not the only object of the prohibitions given forth then. The repetition of these in this book is a testimony to their importance; nor can we wonder, seeing what fearful charges and cautions were given against idolatry in the last chapter, that the injunctions should be gone over again in this, of such special observances as were fitted to strengthen the barrier and widen the interval between the Hebrews and all other people.... It is interesting to note a distinction between the law of meats and the law of the Sabbath, which some would contend for as being but a ceremonial observance. In the fourth commandment, the obligation is extended to the "stranger within thy gates," on whom the duty was made as imperative as on the Israelites themselves. But (verse 21) that which was made unlawful for an Israelite to eat, might be given to the stranger that he might eat it.

21-29.—The law of tithes is here repeated, it being an integral and indispensable part of the Hebrew polity. The priests had a certain portion of the offerings along with the people. This formed one of their most important perquisites. When the distance prevented them from going to Jerusalem along with their tithe in kind, they were to turn it into money, not necessarily for the purchase of animals to be offered in the place which the Lord should choose, but for the purchase of whatsoever they desired; and then in that place they were to hold a feast to the Lord with their households. It is worthy of being noticed, that on this occasion of manifesting their obedience and fear of the Lord, they were bidden to rejoice, and had

express permission for the use of wine and strong drink. . . . The phrase of "within thy gates," which occurs so often in connexion with the Levites, intimates the frequent habit of having an ecclesiastic for one of their inmates, while, in connexion with the stranger, and fatherless, and widow, it proves the extent to which hospitality was carried—a virtue then allied with charity in its most munificent style, and not as now restricted to the festivities of mere companionship with acquaintances and equals. These dependents on their bounty for a home, were taken along with them to join in the holy feasts at Jerusalem.

DEUTERONOMY xv. 1-11.—This law of release is applicable not to strangers but to Jews, and not to all Jews it would seem, but to the poor of them only. (verses 4, 7-11.) Nothing can exceed the beauty and tenderness of these injunctions in behalf of the poor—equal to all that is enjoined us under our new and larger dispensation. The promises intermingled with these humane and benevolent charges, remind us of the aphorism, that "he who giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord." There is something quite touching in these pleadings and remonstrances from the upper sanctuary on behalf of the poor, and the strangers, and the fatherless, and the widows. And what beauty of expression, too, to which Shakspeare seems all alive when he tells of a heart for pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity. That "the poor shall never cease out of the land," suggests the same truth in the other form given to it by our Saviour, when He says—"For the poor ye have always with you."

12-23.—This law of release extends from debts to persons that have become property. The year of release

from debt, however, seems to have been a fixed year, verse 9—whereas the release from slavery took place any year after the expiry of six years' service. The same beautiful tenderness, which we remarked in the former passage, shines forth also in this. Their own redemption by God from the bitter servitude of Egypt, is pressed home upon their feelings, and certainly forms a very touching argument for their kindness to those in a state of bondage under their own roofs—even as God forgiving us for Christ's sake is urged as a reason for our forgiving each other. Over and above the release of the bond-servant, it was enjoined to give him some stock on hand at parting. And this is further urged by the consideration that he had been of double value over a hired servant. In Isaiah xvi. 14, three years are said to be as the years of an hireling; but, at all events, the slave had served without wages.

What could not be offered to the Lord in sacrifice, because of some blemish therein, might nevertheless be eaten. The sacrifices of the law are typical of Him who was offered a Lamb without spot and without blemish unto God.

DEUTERONOMY XVI. 1-12.—The month Abib was the month of first-fruits. The Passover was a feast of commemoration for their being brought out of Egypt, and a sacrifice, even that of the Paschal Lamb. The unleavened bread is called the bread of affliction, because distasteful and eaten in remembrance of that bitter bondage from which they were delivered. It was also expressive of the haste wherewith they came out, it being so great that they had not time to leaven the bread which they took with

them. The remembrance thus kept alive was not confined to the periodical awakenings of particular and set days, but was to be kept awake by them all the days of their lives. And this great solemnity was to be observed, not in their own houses, but at the place which God fixed upon, and at sunset, that being the time when they took their departure from Egypt. Seven weeks after the Pass-over brought on the feast of Pentecost. Though the offering on that occasion was prescribed, yet is it termed a freewill-offering, because they seem to have been left to themselves as to the amount of the offering.... The remembrance that they were bondmen in Egypt seems appended to the duty enjoined in verse 11—of kindness to the stranger, and others in any way dependent upon them.

13-22.—I should like to know the precise times of these three feasts, for it strikes me that the feast of weeks and that of tabernacles must have come close on each other. The feast here prescribed was at once to be a solemn and a joyful one.—Let me look at religion in this aspect, and let the joy of the Lord be my strength.... Each man was required to give according to his ability—or according as the Lord had blessed him.—Pour forth a spirit of liberality, O God, over the land, now that the Church is cast on the offerings of the people.

Here, too, is an homage rendered to the importance of law, but withal a direction to the ministers thereof that they shall judge the people with just judgment. The direction in verse 20 seems to be an extension of the rule of equity from the magistrates to the people. Then follows the prohibition of groves and images—of groves, that is to say, near unto the altar of God. This would liken it to the idolatrous altars of the heathen around them.



DEUTERONOMY XVII. 1-13.—It will prepare us more for understanding how the offering of a blemished victim should be viewed as an abomination, when we connect the sacrifices with their great Antitype—Him who was offered up without spot unto God.

And here, too, God's intolerance of idolatry is again strongly set forth; and a great end, though not the only end, of criminal legislation is laid down—the putting away of the evil from amongst them. It is well to notice here, too, the law of testimony before judges—a law which has been very generally adopted in the civilized world.

We have furthermore the institution of a higher tribunal for the harder and more important cases. It is worthy of observation that the judge, (verse 12,) is made synonymous with the Spirit which standeth to minister there. When that is not a spirit of equity and truth—when the express ordinance of God is thus violated in high places—what have we to look for but a great national judgment and overthrow!.... Here another end of legislation is specified—not the removal of evil only, but the prevention of it, or “that the people might hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.”

14-20.—The license to elect a king given here must be reconcilable with the offence taken at the determination of the Israelites to have a king when Saul was chosen. Many are the seeming discrepancies which a fuller knowledge of circumstances would remove. Saul, however, was fixed upon by God, though afterwards approved of by the people; and thus far there was a conformity to the charge given in this passage. He was chosen from among themselves.... In the subsequent history of the Israelites there

did occur sad delinquencies from the admonitions here put forth—both as to trust in Egypt, and as to ensnaring polygamy—and all this in face of a law, whereof the kings were required to write a copy and keep it by them, and peruse it all the days of their lives. This wholesome practice fell also into lamentable desuetude, insomuch that a copy of the Law was a discovery in the days of Josiah. It is interesting, however, to mark the present direction as one of the earliest intimations given of the importance of a written revelation. One of the special purposes for this observation by the king is worthy of being adverted to—that his heart might not be lifted up above his brethren. That is a wholesome feeling of equality, which stands on the common ground of religion.

DEUTERONOMY XVIII. 1-14.—The distinction between priests and Levites does not seem clearly marked in this passage. It was optional for a Levite in any part of the country to fix on Jerusalem as his residence, where he shared alike in the offerings with his brethren who were there before him. The matter of their influx, in regard to its amount, would regulate itself. They might have property in the place which they left, and which they could sell before settling in the metropolis. The care made for the provision of ecclesiastics under the Old Dispensation, is of standing obligation in the Church of God.

Then follows a fresh dissuasive against the abominations of that paganism which it was their duty both utterly to extirpate from the land, and then utterly to shun, after they had taken the occupation of it.... Their being perfect with God, in this passage, relates more to the extent

of their obedience than to the degree of it; and signifies more that no one particular of their required obligations should be omitted, than that they should be absolutely immaculate and without a flaw in their acquittal of them. —But let perfection, O Lord, in its highest sense, be the honest aim and aspiration of my heart at all times.

15-22.—From the false prophets against whom he warns them, he turns their attention to the true Prophet whom God was to raise up like unto Moses.... The people were afraid of direct converse with God, and entreated that Moses should be His messenger to them. And well might we shun the fellowship of terror and despair to which we should be exposed, were there none between us and the Lawgiver in Heaven, whom we have offended. Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and man, can lay His hands upon us both. See Acts iii. 22. This mediatorship is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the resemblance which obtains between Christ and Moses. Let us hear Him and Him only—renouncing our own wisdom, and calling no man master—seeing that we have one Master, even Christ.... The criterion here given by which to distinguish between a true and false prophet, may not be the utterance of a prophecy, but an attempt to convince by a sign or miracle which should be of immediate fulfilment, and the failure of which would at once set aside his claims. Even though it should come to pass, the evidence given by it would be neutralized by his doctrine if he enjoined the worship of other gods, (ch. xiii. 1-3.) See Jer. xxviii. 8, 9.

DEUTERONOMY XIX. 1-13.—A way was prepared for the cities of refuge, that the offender might have ready access thereto. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," is the sentence

applied to our Saviour, through whom we have freedom of access to the offended Lawgiver. There is a failure in the analogy, inasmuch as the city was a refuge only for him who was not worthy of death—whereas Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin; and to the refuge of his mediatorship the chief of sinners is invited. But let me remember what is said of those who sin "wilfully;" and that the forgiveness of the Gospel is a forgiveness that God may be feared. The three other and prospective cities were additional to the three given on this side of Jordan; and have never yet been added, as the enlargement spoken of in the text has not yet taken place. The oath sworn unto the fathers still remains to be fulfilled; and the condition on their part of loving the Lord their God, and walking ever in His ways, has most certainly not been fulfilled.... I think the advocates for the abolition of capital punishment receive great discountenance from the peremptory way in which the penalty for murder is laid down.

14-21.—The deference here given to property by the written law, is in keeping with that law of our nature by which a strong proprietary feeling is implanted in the heart of man. The reference made to the "old time," falls in with the law of use and wont, as well as the strong possessory feelings of our nature.

It were well for a philosophical and learned jurist to confront the civil law of the Hebrews given by inspiration, with the laws and usages of the most enlightened nations; and also with the principles of his profession. The principle of prevention by example, as well as of correction and removal in the particular instance, is here adverted to; and the way in which the rule of capital punishment is given forth, along with that of the minor punishment,

speaks strongly against those who oppose the penalty of death in all instances whatever. Here life for life is as absolute and unreserved an ordination as the eye for eye or tooth for tooth.

*April, 1843.*

DEUTERONOMY XX. 1-9.—We may observe how closely and constantly religion is implicated with all the national affairs of this people chosen of God: The priest was to hold converse with the army, and to animate their heart with confidence in God.—May we be sustained so in the hour of our approaching warfare. Do thou fight for us, O God, and save us. Let us not be terrified because of our enemies; and may we be more than conquerors through Him that loveth us.... After the priest had inspired the soldiers with the right courage, the officers came forward and proclaimed the conditions or circumstances, in which or under which if any were placed, they might retire. None of these conditions are applicable to us, save the last. There can be no discharge from our warfare on the ground of personal or family convenience; but let the fearful and faint-hearted have leave to fall away. Yet let an army, O God, equal to that of Gideon remain with us—of men good and true, who shall be valiant for principle and be willing to give up all for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of His people in our land.

10-20.—The proclamation of peace was only to be made to those cities which the Israelites were to besiege in their future wars and after their settlement in the land of Canaan—for the order given in reference to its inhabitants was that they should be utterly destroyed. If the peace was not accepted and the city was taken, then the extermination was only to reach the grown-up males—the

women and the little ones being to be spared. This was only to apply, however, to cities far off, and not to the cities of those nations of whom it was decreed that there should be an utter extirpation—and this lest the Israelites should be seduced by their wicked and idolatrous example. That was also a remarkable injunction regarding the conduct of sieges, by which it was forbidden to destroy any tree that yielded subsistence to man—a lesson to us not to waste or destroy food, but to husband it agreeably to the direction, “Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.” Let us make a virtue of this frugality. It was of the trees which yielded no meat that the Israelites were to build their bulwarks.

DEUTERONOMY XXI. 1-9.—This is a very interesting rite, and abundantly capable too, like most of the others, of being spiritualized, or having a moral assigned to it. It teaches that we cannot wash our hands in innocency without an expiation, and which expiation at the same time would have been of no avail, had the disavowal of those who offered it been untrue—had they either been partakers in the guilt or known who were so. The guilt was put away by their doing right in the sight of God. . . . The cry for mercy was over the slain body of the victim, and yet it was only for the mercy that would lay not innocent blood to their charge, and so a cry that would be of no effect in bringing down mercy on those who should be guilty of that blood. . . . We may here remark that the title of priest seems at times to have been extended to all the sons of Levi, (verse 5,) and we have the important information that they had the office of judges in civil and criminal matters throughout the land. By them “every stroke



and every controversy "appear to have been tried, and by their word to have been decided.

10-23.—There is a concession here to the Hebrews because of the hardness of their hearts—an adaptation and accommodation of the rules regarding marriage to the subjective state of the people on whom they bore. The dismissal of a wife at pleasure, even with all the alleviations which are here enjoined, could not be sustained under our present economy.

In the next paragraph there is another accommodation, in that polygamy was suffered.... It is interesting to note here the law of primogeniture. One would like to know how the division of property proceeded in Judea.

There is then a most emphatic demonstration given to the obligation and indispensable rightness, as well as the necessity, of filial obedience. It marks, too, how intolerable it was deemed to have such a nuisance in a family as a dissipated and worthless son. Though such a procedure as is here enjoined could no longer be advocated, yet a strong argument is supplied by this passage against so enormous an evil, which, in the pulpit as well as everywhere else, should be denounced to the uttermost—both for the sake of the reprobates themselves, and of the families to whom they belong.

The parenthetic clause in the last verse derives great importance from the use which Paul in his epistle to the Galatians makes of it for helping out his argument.

DEUTERONOMY XXII. 1-12.—This law of kind and brotherly care for the property of others, is one of the many exhibitions of that tenderness which breaks forth in the Jewish code, and is by no means, as we are too apt to

apprehend it, the exclusive characteristic of the Christian morality.

There follows a remarkable prohibition, which points to a distinction, and serves to fortify the distance between the sexes, and which evinces how much it forms part of the Divine jurisprudence that this ethical department should be fortified by the direct sanctions of God's own express will.... The next injunction most strongly illustrated is one of beautiful humanity. God takes care for oxen, nay, for sparrows; and we should not treat with lightness or disrespect the legislation, or even the preaching, that bears against cruelty to animals.... The precautionary ordinance for the prevention of accidents is also another and interesting descent of religion to the affairs of men.... The laws to prevent mixture or confusion seem to have somewhat more than an arbitrary character in them, and to be of more general import than that of multiplying the distinctions, with the view of securing the separation between Jews and Gentiles. There is, in common with the law of verse 5, an enjoined avoidance of such mixtures as lead to confusion; and this is the great principle and expression of holiness. The fringes are memoranda of God's commandments, (Num. xv. 39,) and perhaps served, too, the purpose of signalizing the Israelites by a peculiar costume or uniform.

13-22.—The learned are not agreed as to the evidence here produced by the father of his daughter's innocence. The value of female reputation is indicated by this law—inasmuch that if unjustly aspersed, there is a heavy punishment laid on the calumniator; and, on the other hand, a dreadful vengeance is inflicted on the transgression of chastity by a woman. The instance specified is not a case

of adultery, but of unchastity previous, and it may be long previous, to marriage. Yet, though even at the distance of years, vengeance was made to overtake the offender. It is true that the subsequent marriage aggravated the crime, and brought back upon it, as it were, the charge of what may be called a prospective adultery. But here it is to be remarked, that it may not have been an adultery which imposed on the husband the children of another man, but an adultery, notwithstanding, which vitiated the connexion. That is a higher and purer morality which recognises good or evil in an action of itself, and by its own nature, apart from all regard to the consequences.

The sin of verse 22, again, is that not of prospective but instant and direct adultery. In the former case, the man did not partake in the adulterous character of the guilt—for the woman's subsequent marriage was her act, not his; but in the latter case, the man, with the full knowledge of her being a married woman, incurred along with her the full charge of adultery—and so both had to die.

23-30.—The severity of the punishment is called forth by the adultery which forms the gravamen of the crime. If committed in the city, where the woman could have been heard had she cried out, and if she did not cry, then both parties were put to death—but only the man if she was forced in the field, and could not help herself. When the gravamen of adultery is not in the crime, when she is a single woman, the guilt is less—but still there is a guilt to be punished by the judge. These prohibitions, so fortified and enforced, may well convince us how evil and how bitter a thing unchastity is in the sight of God. Let us not offend against this holy law of His, even in thought

—remembering that they are only the pure in heart who can see His face.

DEUTERONOMY XXIII. 1-14.—Here a stigma is put on certain bodily defects, and certain methods of descent, though the will of the individuals to whom this stigma is affixed had nought to do either with the one or the other. We see here on a small scale the same procedure which obtains with the species at large, who were degraded in Adam, from whom they derived both the greatest physical and greatest moral evils.... The objection—What had the Ammonites or Moabites to do with the misconduct of their ancestors? is the same in principle with—How could we help the delinquency of our first parents?—and must be met in the same way—“Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?” He seeth the end from the beginning; and the day is coming which will vindicate and manifest all the glories of His perfect character. We see but a part of His ways.

The same God who is the enemy of all moral, would have us also to put away and remove from sight all physical defilements, else He threatens here to withdraw His protection from enemies. The same respect to externals which leads to the removal of all that disgusts or annoys, supplies the principle on which, perhaps, even splendour, but at all events decency, of investiture, whether in the fabric of a church or the apparel of its office-bearers, might be advocated.... Observe here the application of the term holy, as denoting removal and separation even of that which is offensive in material things. There is a proverb which associates cleanliness with godliness.

15-25.—One should suppose that they must be the servants who were oppressed and treated wrongously by their master, who were to receive a harbour from those with whom they had taken refuge.... The abomination of the Divinity for uncleanness is here again put forth strongly.

The distinction between an Israelite and a stranger is supposed to lie in this: that the former was little given to the pursuits of trade or commerce, so that not being in the way of making a profit, he could not afford an interest; and so a loan to him was given in compassion or charity. The case was different with a stranger, from whom it was lawful to have a part of his profits in the shape of interest. This, however, may not exhaust the whole matter—for the more generous treatment of the brethren might have also been required on the principle of doing good, specially to the household of faith.

We have here, in a more expanded form, the aphorism of Ecclesiastes—Better is it not to vow at all than to vow and not pay.

The liberty of eating the produce of a neighbour's field was used even to the days of the New Testament, as in the case of our Saviour's disciples. It was allowed to eat to satisfy hunger, but not to take away—when it would have been stealth.

DEUTERONOMY XXIV. 1-9.—It was not because of unfaithfulness, but because of some uncleanness not involving moral guilt, that the husband was permitted to put away his wife—a permission given, our Saviour tells us, because of the hardness of their hearts. However, it was imperative that if married to another man after the separation, and

this second husband were to die, she should not be taken back by the first husband.

There is an accommodation of kindness and tenderness in the next provision—of leave to a husband to stay at home the first year after his marriage—of a piece with the beautiful humanity which shines forth in many other enactments of the Jewish code.

The next prohibition is another of the same—a provision in behalf of those poor who, reduced to pawn, might be tempted to give up what is essential to their subsistence.

And what an emphatic condemnation does the law against man-stealing lay on the kidnappings of Africa!

The law of leprosy is enforced by the precedent of Miriam, in whose case, of exalted rank as she was, there was no exemption from the purification of the prescribed ritual.

10-22.—It is delightful to hear from the mouth of one of God's expressly commissioned messengers, those lessons of delicacy and respect as well as of compassion for the poor. One reason for not going into the house is to give the borrower the unfettered choice of what he would pledge, instead of the lender having that choice when admitted to a survey of the articles inside.

How our gracious Father interposes as the protector of the dependent and the poor! And this law of gentleness extends to the stranger as well as to the Israelite.

There is here given forth a principle of human law, which seems to be traversed both in the general and special dealings of God with men. His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.

The same consideration for the helpless and the depen-



dent is evinced in the next precept, where justice, however, as well as humanity, forms an ingredient—it relating to uprightness of judgment.

The same beautiful morality is sustained throughout to the end of this chapter ; and it does give a more amiable view of the Jewish code than is generally entertained of it.

DEUTERONOMY XXV.—There is the same spirit of mercy mixed with justice, in the regulation here given of the number of stripes. The practice was not even to go the length of forty—"forty stripes save one." (2 Cor. xi. 24.)

Even the very inferior animals come under the care and cognizance of Him who is good unto all. What a lesson here against the abominable cruelties of men to the creatures beneath them!

The next passage respecting marriage extends the rule, in this instance at least, beyond what is held to be obligatory with us, that a man should not marry his brother's widow. This was the passage quoted by the infidels of our Saviour's time, when they wanted to puzzle Him respecting the soul's immortality. The sanction of public contempt is here ordained for the enforcement of a required observation.

And justice as well as mercy is strictly enjoined.—The more we study the moral code of the Jews, the greater the number of features shall we behold in it for our admiration.

God takes upon Himself the prerogative of visiting on children the iniquities of their fathers. The history and theology of Scripture are in harmony with each other, and both are in harmony with the course of nature and experience.

DEUTERONOMY XXVI.—This profession at the offering of the first-fruits is full of appropriate sentiment for a Hebrew, who, if he uttered it with intelligence, would be reminded of the rock whence he was hewn, and of his obligations to God for enlargement from the state of bondage and oppression in which they had been held—so as that a part of the produce should be rendered as an acknowledgment of thankfulness for the good land which had been given to them.... The warrant for rejoicing before the Lord is an intimation to us that the way of religion is a way of pleasantness. The Levite and the stranger are not forgotten, but are specified as to have a part in this festal celebration.

See Mr. Thorburn's book on tithes. The profession was that he had not reserved aught of them for his own particular use, but had brought them all out of his house; that he had not profaned them when himself ceremonially unclean as in mourning, or misapplied them to common use; and that he had not idolatrously consecrated them to gods, or superstitiously applied them to the benefit of the dead.

Then follows a general statement, so frequently made in the book of Deuteronomy, of the relation in which they stand to their Father in Heaven, and of the duties and solemn responsibilities which flow from—He as their God, they as His chosen and peculiar people.

DEUTERONOMY XXVII. 1-8.—There is here an anticipative direction which was to be afterwards fulfilled. These were distinct from the monumental stones gathered out of Jordan, and set up as a memorial of the miraculous passage over that river. It is uncertain to what amount

the law was inscribed. Along with the pillars on which the law was graven, there was an altar both for burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. It was only in virtue of what the altar represents that they could rejoice before the Lord their God. Had the law stood there alone, it would have reminded them of sin and condemnation; but the altar of expiation was also there: and thus could they celebrate Divine worship both in peace and with rejoicing. The law required the juxtaposition of the altar; but neither did the altar supersede the juxtaposition of the law, the words of which were written plainly upon the pillars, signifying that reconciliation with God by the great and appointed Sacrifice does not exempt us from the observation of the law.

9-26.—It is their becoming the Lord's people that forms the special reason, the *therefore* why they should obey His voice. Because thou art my people, and elsewhere because I am thy God, as when ushering in the Decalogue. (Ex. xx. 2.) Reconciliation precedes, not supersedes, obedience.... There is a larger place for the curses than for the blessing—for a law that in its form and substance was more prohibitive than injunctive, and for subjects far more prone to transgression than obedience. All the tribes that stood on Gerizim to bless were descended from children of Jacob's wives. The disgraced Reuben and Zebulun, and the rest, or sons of the concubines, were appointed to pronounce the curses. It is well to note the sins thus specially stigmatized: idolatry filial impiety—rapacity—inhumanity, and more especially to the helpless—corrupt judgment—incest—beastiality—violence, and specially in secrecy or guile—murder, and specially for gain—and lastly, that which brings every

son and daughter of Adam under the condemnation and the curse, want of conformity to the law in any of its requirements—a conformity which one and all of us have so miserably fallen short of. Convince of sin, O God!

DEUTERONOMY XXVIII. 1-14.—Let it be observed, that they are temporal sanctions by which the law is enforced, both in the blessings and curses. And let us not undervalue these, but learn to prize and be thankful even for the short-lived enjoyments of earth—for the comforts of wealth and health, and a rightly-conditioned family, and security from external violence, and the prosperity of all our undertakings. Christianity does not put these things out of account, but expressly tells us that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. And Paul speaks of God not leaving Himself without a witness, but giving rain and fruitful seasons. Let not the spirituality of our later dispensation lead us to depreciate the worth of temporal benefits, or withhold the gratitude that is due for them. Even the world at large recognises the government of a righteous God in the prosperity of the righteous, as the heathen did when they witnessed the seasons of prosperity which the Israelites enjoyed under the reign of their better kings. Again, let not the orthodoxy of our evangelical system, ill understood and ill applied; lead us to degrade the importance of a practical conformity with the law of God. This has long been an incubus, I feel, on the active principles of my nature in the religious exercise of them.

15-20.—Now follow the curses for disobedience, which are nearly all counterpart to the blessings which had just been promised, if they kept the covenant into which they

were entering with their God. The parallelism is maintained at the first in the very particulars which had been before specified. There is one general and overhanging curse, stated in the twentieth verse as attaching to all which they set their hand unto for to do, and which sits over against what is said in the twelfth verse, of God blessing all the work of their hands. It is said of the godly man, that whatsoever he doeth shall prosper, (Ps. i.) but that the ungodly are not so. He will find his devices and undertakings to be vexation and vanity. These might be many, and intense might be the affection and anxiety for their success; but the counsel of the Lord against them, that alone shall stand.—O let me not forget that failure and rebuke await all the enterprises of my own wisdom, if not begun and prosecuted in dependence upon God, and in that fear of Him which is the beginning of all wisdom!

21-29.—What an accumulation of penalties and curses are we presented with here—marking the intolerance of God for sin, and how much it is the object of His abomination. It reminds one of the expression, God casting the fury of His wrath, and raining it upon them, (Job xx. 23)—also, “Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest.” (Ps. xi. 6.) It is thus that He who hateth iniquity heapeth all sorts of calamity on the rebellious Israelites, both internal and external; pestilence within their borders, violence and invasion from without, diseases of all kinds both on themselves and on the fruits of the earth—fever and inflammation to the former, blasting and mildew to the latter. The very elements were made to conspire against them. Mark the strength of the expressions—the heaven brass,



the earth iron. The rain of powder and dust indicates the extreme drought, in that these were blown from the highway on the fields—a most severe visitation in a hot climate; and then there were the fell discomfitures which they received at the hand of their enemies, and the appalling effect of these. No wonder at the madness and astonishment which ensued from these various and dire chastisements, or that they groped and were in blindness and perplexity in the dread anticipation of such unknown evils as they were ever and anon exposed to from the oppressors and spoilers of their race. How fearfully and with what graphic truth of fulfilment have these threats been all realized! The curses are so many predictions; and this whole chapter forms a most striking prophecy, delivered thousands of years before its final accomplishment.

30-44.—The evils which are threatened in this passage are those consequent on a successful invasion by enemies, violation and dispossession of houses and lands, and plunder of all that can be turned to use or taken off, and the seizure and captivity of their children—all this to be done by a foreign nation, and themselves to be so powerless and paralyzed as to have no might in their hand, but to be oppressed and crushed away. The madness for what they saw done before them, reminds me of Rebecca's father, in the Novel of *Ivanhoe*, where Scott describes graphically, because with the eye of an observer, the cruelties that historically and experimentally were practised upon the Jews. Their becoming an astonishment and byword among all people, was signally fulfilled after the destruction of Jerusalem, and along the track of the middle ages, and even to a certain degree in our own day.



Over and above the calamities of invasion and captivity, were disease upon themselves and families, and a blight, with other ruinous visitations, upon their fields. There is another variation of their distress from the conquest of invaders, their captivity and spoliation, which also had its fulfilment in their history, when they were not transported from their land, but suffered to abide in the state of a subject territory—as when they became a Roman province. Then the stranger was very high, and they very low.

45-57.—These fearful threatenings are still further heaped the one upon the other. Their fulfilment being a sign and wonder, has been palpably verified. There seems here one clear instance of the phrase “for ever,” (verse 46,) being used in a modified sense: The period of these calamities will come to an end, though the memorial of them as a sign and wonder might be everlasting.... Let me be encouraged by the renewed expression in verse 47, of God’s service being a glad and grateful service.... The prediction of their being subjugated by a nation from afar, has had two notable fulfilments, the last being the greatest—first by the Babylonians, then by the Romans, whose standard was an eagle. (verse 49.) What a striking coincidence between the prophecy by Moses, and the history of the siege of Jerusalem by Josephus—bespeaking a far reach of anticipation! The same dread extremities were realized in the former of the two sieges, as Jeremiah tells us in his book of Lamentations. “The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people” What an evil and bitter thing to sin against God!

58-68.—Give me, O Lord, a right sense of Thee and of

Thy glorious and fearful name as the Lord *my* God. Be Thou mine, and yet may I fear Thee .... The plagues of rebellious Israel were indeed wonderful. God manifested both His goodness and severity towards them—at one time rejoicing over them for good; at another rejoicing—and what an appalling view does this give of sin—rejoicing over their destruction. As their wars and sieges have been here depicted with graphic truth, so also is their dispersion. The trembling heart, the total want of security among the nations whither they had been driven, their doubtfulness even of life—all have been strikingly exemplified on this nation of outcasts, exposed as they were to the scorn and violence of all among whom they had been so cruelly scattered. Their state of utter helplessness and desperation is altogether most vividly portrayed .... I cannot point to any single historical event as being the fulfilment of the last prediction—though certain it is that every land to which they were driven was to them a land of bondage, as hard and grinding as had been the land of Egypt.

DEUTERONOMY XXIX. 1-13.—The question is whether this first verse be a summation of what has gone before, or a prefatory introduction to what follows. There are some reasons for thinking that the covenant here referred to was essentially distinct in certain particulars from that of Horeb—though it is affirmed by Henry to be a renewal of the same on the entry of the Israelites into their promised land .... When Moses says that they had seen what happened in Egypt, he of course applies this in its literal sense only to those of the congregation who must have been youths at the time of these transactions—yet

seeing they saw not, and hearing they heard not. The Lord withheld from them that grace of wisdom which is given liberally to all who ask for it in honest desirousness. This was all the more inexcusable that they had so many miracles which might well have impressed on them the sense and right knowledge of God—their clothes being miraculously preserved, and their food, too, being not of the ordinary sort, but given them by miracle. Their obligation to the keeping of the covenant is enforced upon them by the successes which God had given them at the termination of their journey through the wilderness. On these promises does he make a general appeal to the people, and with great solemnity and force.

14-29.—The covenant is made to embrace all who were with them and proselyted to the extent of having renounced their idolatry, or who were not with them, because detained from attendance, if they formed part of the nation, whether as Israelites or naturalized strangers. None of these must regard themselves as exempted from this solemn compact, lest they should lapse into the contagion of surrounding idolatry, and prove a root of bitterness, spreading its own likeness as a running plant or spreading leprosy. This image is given in Hebrews xii. 15; and the caveat is pronounced as a preventive against many being defiled. It is well to single out every man who might delude himself with the idea that he is not included in this transaction, lest he should flatter himself with the imagination of a peace when there is no peace, and so run into all the excesses of riotous and impure paganism. God shall single out every such man for all the curses denounced in His book, nay, will lay them on whole communities should they prove transgressors of the

covenant . . . . The picture of a territory thus blasted and burnt up is a very striking one, and fitted, as a testimony against the evil of a departure from Himself, to impress all the observers or inquirers who should make it the subject of notice and speculation . . . . There is a remarkable coincidence between Moses and Paul, in their respective treatments of the same subject, that is, the description of the great national changes and revolutions which befell the Jews—the one conducting his with the affirming of severity as a prerogative of God, the other with affirming the unsearchableness of His counsels. (Rom. xi. 33, &c.) There is much, certainly, in the footsteps of His administration which is beyond our comprehension; and more especially when we connect with the rebellions of Israel the relation in which they stand to God's procedure, as stated in verse 4 of this chapter. The revealed things, however, are what we have to do with—as here the brand fastened on idolatry.

DEUTERONOMY xxx. 1-10.—Now follows what may be thought to signalize this covenant from the one given at Horeb—we mean the restorative and remedial part of it, and by which it stands out in clearer resemblance to the Christian dispensation. There is compassion upon repentance: there is the promise, on this, of a recall from captivity and bondage. Above all, there is what is tantamount to regeneration—in the circumcision and change of the heart, so as that it shall love God. The fruit of this change is obedience, the doing of the commandments. Thenceforth the curses are transferred from them to their enemies. The children of Israel will be recalled to their own land; and God will again rejoice over them for good.

—Hasten in thine own good time, O Lord, this blessed consummation. Incline us as well as them to keep all that is written in the book of Thy law, and to turn unto Thee with all our hearts and souls, so that we may spiritually live; for the most fearful of all deaths is to be dead unto Thee.

11-20.—This remarkable passage is quoted by Paul; and as it occurs here, may be understood to indicate that the authority of the Word is paramount to that of all conceptions or imaginations of our own, either of things in heaven above or in the earth beneath. We are not left to our own fancies in this matter, those sparks of our own kindling. We have a sure word to which, and in the obvious sense of it, we should do well in giving earnest heed, and thus will the true light at length shine upon us. We have not to fetch our knowledge of God's will, or any part of our theology, from a distance.—O Heavenly Father, let us betake ourselves to this plain way, in which the man who runs may read. Give us to love Thee, and to keep Thy recorded statutes. Let us cleave unto Thee, the God of Scripture, and as set forth there; and let us not be carried thence to the idols of our own imagination. Blessed be Thy name, that Thou hast brought the word of life so near unto us; and in our faithful adherence thereto may we obtain the light of life, and the everlasting favour of Him who is our life and the length of our days.

*May, 1843.*

DEUTERONOMY xxxi. 1-8.—The venerable Moses, with whom we have held converse so long, is now on the eve of taking leave. He certainly stands among the highest, if not the very highest, of those whom I have fixed upon as the magnates of the Old Testament. My only difficulty

is in deciding between him and Abraham—to either the one or other of whom I would assign the first rank. I would hesitate to call Noah a magnate, though Enoch I would. Both Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Joshua, stand forth as secondaries to my imagination.... Mark here the shortening of human life, in that Moses was only 120. He gives his farewell charge and encouragement to the people—assuring them of victory over the nations on the other as on their present side of Jordan, but withal laying the commission upon them of executing God's will by their full extermination. He then deposes and devolves his authority on Joshua, in the sight of all the people, that they may be led, in all time coming, to own the legitimacy of his power; and concludes with words of encouragement to Joshua—assuring him of the Lord's countenance and presence in the great work that had been given him to do.

9-23.—These early notices of writing as applied to God's revelation are deeply interesting; and the observance here laid down of a septennial public reading of what was thus written, ensured a solid historical pathway by which it might travel downward to subsequent ages. It was well that custodiers were appointed for this precious literary treasure in the priests and elders of Israel; and also that the public reading formed not only a guarantee for the preservation, but also for the integrity, of the Sacred Record.

Moses had before given the sanction of his authority in favour of Joshua as their future commander; but God Himself now confirms the appointment by the visible symbols of His own presence and approbation. He then foretells the grievous defections that were afterwards to



ensue, and His own consequent chastisements; and, what is peculiarly interesting, points out with His own hand the channel of a written revelation, by which to convey the knowledge of His will and of His ways to succeeding generations. . . . The celebrated Song of Moses was dictated by God Himself for this express purpose. Moses, as the penman or amanuensis of God, committed it to writing, and concludes by reiterating Joshua's commission, accompanying the same with encouragements and charges.

24-30.—What Moses had thus written was deposited by the side of the ark of the covenant—some say in a receptacle, or lateral box attached to it, called *κρυφή*, which may signify a place for custody as well as concealment. It is a beautiful tradition, if it were fully authenticated, and would serve mightily to strengthen the evidence for the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament—that every inspired book was laid up in this depository; and that books, though respected and of authority, but not inspired, were kept out of it—from which it is alleged that the *apocryphal* Scriptures derive their title and designation. . . . It is a remarkable thing that the absolute prediction of their rebellion and degeneracy should here be made to accompany the means of moral suasion brought to bear on the object of warning, and so of preserving them. They would still, however, operate with a certain practical force on each generation, in as far as they might be desirous of averting the threatened evils from themselves.—Let there be peace and truth and righteousness, at least in our day. The doctrine of an absolute predestination does not supersede the precepts of Christianity.

DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 1-6.—This magnificent Ode was

composed for the express purpose of its being a national song, or poem, and therefore familiar as household words to the children of Israel. It begins with an invocation to the heavens and the earth, and after describing the right influences of its spirit and sentiments on the minds of those who used it, it breaks out into the praises of the Most High, ascribing to Him greatness and perfection, and the sacred attributes of justice and truth. Never was a written memorial more fitted for its end—as a caveat against the degeneracy which is here so vividly pictured forth, and so feelingly deplored! In characterizing the rebelliousness of the nation, the remarkable expression is made use of, that their spot is not the spot of God's children—marking that His children even have their spots also—for if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. Theirs, on the other hand, was a desperate and fatal backsliding; and it is another sad evidence of their obstinate perversity, that, in the face of this remonstrance, they should have run headlong into the woful and irrecoverable defections into which they afterwards fell. Their unworthy requital of all the signal benefits which they had received at the hand of God is here most emphatically charged upon them.

7-15.—He remounts to their primeval history, to the rock whence they were hewn. In the first division of the world the Lord had respect to a coming accommodation for the children of Israel—thus making His providence subserve His grace, and shaping as it were the arrangements of the human family with a view to the future Church. He found Israel in the wilderness when He disciplined him, and led him about, and protected as well as guided him through all his wanderings—cherishing him

with the care and tenderness of an eagle for its young. Thence He at length ushered him into a good land; and though this at the time of writing the Song was yet an event in anticipation—still as the Song was written for posterity it is couched in the past tense, and so reads as if both the entrance of the people into fertile and flourishing Canaan, as well as the subsequent rebellions and idolatries of the people were events that had already gone by.

16-29.—O Lord, restrain us from our forgetfulness and our light estimation of God. From this fountain-head the Israelites proceeded to the monstrous transgressions of idolatry and the worship of devils. Let us not be unmindful of Him who formed us. Save me from frowardness, and perfect that which is lacking in my faith.... There are expressions here quoted in Rom. x. 19. How literally true it is that the Jews were moved to jealousy and anger by the calling of the Gentiles! And what a demonstration did God then make of His fury in the total overthrow of the Jewish state and polity! Yet He did not make a full end, lest His own honour and the cause of godliness should suffer thereby; whereas the preservation of the Jews and the actual manner of their disposal give signal manifestation of the truth that God reigneth in the earth, and that He is a God of judgment.... There is some part of the sufferings here described which were perhaps more literally realized in the earlier conquests and captivities of the nation than after their last and greatest dispersion.... "The latter end," in verse 29, though capable of a more general application, is specially expressive here of the last national chastisement that was to be inflicted upon them; and we have no doubt is inserted as a warning, and would practically operate to a certain

extent as a caveat on many of the readers and reciters of this poem.

30-43.—How can it be accounted for that they should fall so easy a prey to their enemies, unless their God had been abandoned, He, even in the judgment of their enemies, being so much more powerful than the gods of other nations? There is however a reverse interpretation given of this question—how should one Israelite have chased a thousand Canaanites, unless these latter had been abandoned by their rock, the gods in whom they trusted? According to the former view, the vine of verse 32, must be understood of the vine of Israel, now degenerated. Hence the vengeance of the All-righteous God; but a vengeance that would at length terminate and be fulfilled. But the Lord, after that His judgment has been executed, will repent Himself, and take pity upon his servants.... The last clause of verse 36, is one precious for comfort in the hour of extreme helplessness.... The Song concludes with a promise of a final restoration; and as it was helpful in at least retarding the degeneracy of the Israelites—so in their mouths may it be helpful still in speeding onward their recall from the dispersion which has been made of them over the face of the earth.

44-52.—The want here of the customary initial letter in the Hebrew name of Joshua, causes it to be translated in this place by Hoshea.... The object of this Song was to confirm the adherence of the people to God's law—by which means they should prolong their abode in the land of promise, and put off the fearful execution of the evils here threatened on disobedience.

It is a solemn approach that we now make to the final exit of Moses from the stage of sacred history, and along

which we have kept for so many days by his side. We separate from him with regret; and though there be many bright intervals as we proceed, yet we have the distinct feeling—more particularly when we come so far down as to the reigns of the wicked kings—that we are entering on the darker passages of the Jewish history. The mount on which Moses died is not so well identified as Hor where Aaron died. The trespass at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh is here alleged as being judicially the cause of both these dispensations. Though I have read Robinson, I am not yet satisfied with the adjustment that has been attempted by the supposition of two Meribahs.

DEUTERONOMY xxxiii. 1-11.—This venerable patriarch, like Jacob before him, closes his great career by the pronouncement of blessings on the children of Israel, who had so long been under his charge and guardianship—that is, for forty years, from his converse with God in the bush to the time of his death. The appearances of God are here described as in three places—though what we read of Him in Sinai is most in keeping with the lofty representation of this passage. The law is said by Stephen to have been given by the disposition of angels. The mingled love and authority of God are powerfully set forth. There seems no analogy between the blessings of Jacob and Moses on the respective tribes—those of Moses are evidently in keeping with the more advanced state of things. The disgrace of Reuben and the misconduct of Levi seem to have been alike forgotten—while as to Simeon, no mention is made of him. The blessing here conferred on Levi is worthy of notice, as an example of the manner in which God sanctions and signalizes the priesthood, and also as



conveying the information that the Levites were to occupy the office of teachers as well as priests. The denunciation here laid on the enemies and haters of ecclesiastics has ample scope for its application and fulfilment in this our day.

12-29.—The greatest resemblance between the benedictions of Moses and Jacob is in their blessings of Joseph. "The deep that croucheth beneath," might denote plentiful springs. There is a virtue here ascribed to the moon in vegetation. The predominance of Ephraim over Manasseh is here asserted. The blessing here proceeds more on the tribes, whereas that by Jacob seems to have been somewhat influenced by the persons when his sons were yet alive; and so we find Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, dealt by there according to their respective delinquencies. The religiousness of Issachar and Zebulun seems to be here intimated, while their respective temporal blessings would indicate a foreign or maritime wealth for the one, and a home wealth for the other. Gad was to be a conquering tribe; and blessed be He, that is God, who enlargeth him. Naphtali possessed a western lot, and had the sea of Galilee on the south of him. The words for west and sea are the same in Hebrew. One of the memorabilia of Scripture is comprised in the blessing of Asher. As thy days—so thy strength. The whole concludes with a magnificent ascription to God and of His favour to Israel. "Thine enemies shall be found liars unto Thee,"—will be forced to submit, though with a counterfeit and unwilling submission.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIV.—We now come to the last scene in the history of the great Jewish Legislator, who fills so



mighty a space in the Old Testament—a noble character, in which great power and great sensibility were most gracefully blended. The glory of God and the good of Israel were the paramount desires and principles of his heart; and such, in particular, was the strength of his patriotic affection for his own countrymen, that it could not be overborne by all their provocations. There must, I should think, have been a miraculous showing of the land to Moses; as, optically, I doubt it must be impossible for any ordinary person to reach such an extent of vision from the top of any hill on the east of Jordan. And yet, as in many other instances, the natural is made to help the miraculous—for if wholly miraculous, why ascend to the top of a mountain at all? The line of demarcation between these two is by us unknown.... The contest of Michael with Satan about the body of Moses, has been theorized upon; but it, too, is an unexplained mystery.... The government now passed into delegated and inferior hands; and the Book closes most appropriately with a testimony to the greatness of Moses, and the honours by which he was signalized. We have now described one great department of Holy Writ—the Pentateuch.

### JOSHUA.

JOSHUA I.—Joshua was the servant (minister) of Moses, the servant of God—who, after the death of Moses, directly addressed the words of a charge to Joshua—words both of direction and encouragement.... The boundaries here assigned to the children of Israel are wider than they have ever yet occupied; but we conceive that such an occupation is still in reserve for them. Besides the

appropriate directions for a man of war, we have the injunction to be religiously observant of God's law—not merely the law of utter extermination, which was his special military commission in the land of Canaan, but all the words of the book of God's law, that he may observe fully to do it.

Joshua having received his commission from God, addresses himself to the people; and more especially those tribes whose portions had been assigned to them on the east side of Jordan, but whose duty it was to accompany their brethren on the invasion of Canaan. This address was most duteously responded to. We now accompany the footsteps of a different leader; and we cannot but feel the difference. Such is the graphic individuality of all Scripture characters—in itself an evidence of descriptive and historical truth.

JOSHUA II. 1-11.—The mission of the spies was a special one to Jericho. The testimony given by the Apostle to the faith of Rahab, does not necessarily infer her final salvation, but her salvation from that ruin which involved her whole country. "She perished not with them that believed not." Yet is there ground for thinking that she may have been so converted to the truth as to have saved her soul—more particularly from verse 11th, where she makes acknowledgment of the true and only God. If she was indeed in a state of proper salvation, there seems an indication given by this narrative that, in certain circumstances, there is a falsehood not so inconsistent with moral integrity as to infer the loss of ultimate safety. She did practise a deception on the king of Jericho, for which no man would condemn her; and neither does it appear that God would condemn her. In her case we

have another palpable example of a juster theology spreading beyond the people who were immediately favoured, among the countries through which they passed, or to which they were in any way reported. The fame of their achievements would no doubt travel before them, and might tell on the faith of some, while it told on the fears of all.... There is something very interesting in the notices here given of the sensation produced in Canaan by the approach and the doings of the children of Israel.

12-24.—I should desiderate a likely conjecture by travellers of the mountain to which the spies were directed.—I should imagine that the neighbourhood of Jericho supplies objects of this sort, though my impression of the country between it and Jordan is that it is flat. There are certain juvenile recollections—perhaps of some school books, such as the Sacred Dialogues, familiar to me when a Latin school-boy, more than half a century ago—which impart a great charm to this and similar narratives of the Old Testament. There is a certain graphic and picturesque effect which is given to the passage before us by the visible things which are introduced to it—such as the window and the scarlet cord; and then the hazard, and the adventure, and the deliverance of Rahab and her relatives from the else universal destruction, confer all the interest of romance on this Scripture story.... One can enter into the faintness of heart that was spread throughout the nations of Canaan.... The oath required by Rahab of the men, implies a certain natural sense of religiousness among the people, in that it was probably required as a usual guarantee for the truth of such promises as were sufficiently important to make an oath desirable.

JOSHUA III.—Had the Israelites crowded too near the ark, it would have intercepted the view of those who were farther behind; and so prevented their view of that great signal-post, in the track of which they were required to keep through the before untrodden way that was before them. This is one of the most signal and stupendous of the Old Testament miracles, and well fitted to bind the confidence of the people to Joshua—even as the still more wondrous and impressive miracle of the Red Sea accredited his greater predecessor Moses. The people were called on to solemnize and prepare their minds for this marvellous display of power, by which the Lord was indeed magnified in the sight of them all; and any subsequent unfaithfulness and cowardice of theirs in the prosecution of their great enterprise, was rendered inexcusable. The swollen state of Jordan, occasioned by the melting of the snows on Lebanon, made the miracle all the more illustrious. The twelve men whose appointment is directed in this chapter, were in readiness for the service specified in the next. . . . The “right against Jericho” should help the determination of the place where the passage was effected.

JOSHUA IV. 1-9.—We have here the office of the men whose appointment is intimated in the preceding chapter—that of taking twelve stones from the bed of Jordan, and pitching them in a place where they might be pointed out to posterity as memorials of the great event. But over and above this, there was another and most notable sign of the same event—a duplicate of the former, set up in the river itself—that is, twelve stones on the very place where the ark stood till all the people passed over, proba-

bly passing on both sides of it, so as to connect the miracle with the power of Him who made that ark the residence of His glory. They passed over in haste, but could not fail to make the recognition of what was so palpably set before them. The ark did not move till all the people had got over in safety—when the waters of Jordan returned to their wonted flow. The stones in the river may either have stood above the water, being so high, or built up so high—or could be discerned in crossing it, so as to be appealed to in after ages—even as they were at the time when the book of Joshua was written.

10-24.—It does not appear by what else the Lord magnified Joshua, than by the miracles here recorded, bound up as they were with his management and word of command. The passage of Jordan did for him what the passage of the Red Sea did for Moses. And it was he who gave the order for the priests to come up out of Jordan. And it was a most notable and impressive exhibition when Jordan resumed its natural course on the moment that their feet touched the banks of the river. The stones at Gilgal, set up in commemoration of this great event, form the materials of Leslie's celebrated argument in his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*—it being one of the most signal instances that can be adduced of a monumental evidence for the truth of religion. Gilgal seems lost now to modern observation; but the relation in which Jericho and its plains stand to Jordan, is itself an enduring monumental evidence.

JOSHUA V.—The melting of heart on the part of the Canaanites is descriptively given here, and in a way that serves to impress the historical truth of the narrative.... To

circumcise the children of Israel a *second* time, means the resumption of a practice which had been suspended—though it is uncertain how long. It laid them open to their enemies, had they known of it; but the terror of the Lord was upon them. The hill of foreskins may either have been a hillock formed by their accumulation, or a previous hill in which they were deposited.... The cessation of the manna was itself a miracle, and gave as immediate indication of the Divinity as the first provision of it did. It should have told on the faith of the Israelites.

There is every reason to believe that the appearance to Joshua here recorded was of Jehovah, the Angel of the Covenant. In a few verses before, the Lord (Jehovah) is said to address him; and that He also now appeared to him seems obvious from the identity of verse 15 with Ex. iii. 5, where Joshua gets the same direction that Moses did from Him who is expressly the Lord Jehovah, and for the same reason too—because the place he stood on was holy ground.

JOSHUA VI. 1-15.—The miracle of this chapter ranks with the more stupendous in holy writ. It is interesting to remark the preparation for its achievement—not that efficiently this preparation was at all indispensable—for God could have done instant execution of that which He nevertheless chose should be preceded by the solemn and impressive ceremonial which Himself prescribed. There was no natural causality whatever to connect the previous doings with the ultimate event; but there was much in these doings that served to magnify and raise in the estimation of the people the ministers of the Lord; and more especially that ark which was the residence of His glory,



and the great central object of reference around which clustered the religious worship and observances of the children of Israel. Both the ark and the priests who bore it had been magnified in like manner at the miracle of Jordan; and the same lesson is given forth at this miracle of Jericho.

16-27.—The catastrophe was reserved for the seventh day. One of the seven days must have been a Sabbath; and here is one example in the Old Testament of God overruling by a special direction the general law of Sabbath rest, even as Christ did in the New Testament.... There was fell vengeance executed on the devoted city. It was the first dreadful act of obedience to the order of utter and entire extermination on the west side of Jordan; and it seems to have been rigidly observed, with but one exception. All were destroyed save Rahab and her household. The silver, the gold, the brass, and the iron were consecrated unto the Lord; but every living thing in the city was slaughtered. Rahab's dwelling in Israel at the time that the book of Joshua was written, may but signify that her descendants subsisted there in the form of a distinct family. She is thought to have been married to Salmon, and the mother of Booz, (Matt. i. 5,) and therefore an ancestor of Christ according to the flesh. They were left without the camp to undergo, it is said, the purification necessary to their admittance and naturalization.... See the prediction of Joshua respecting Jericho verified in 1 Kings xvi. 34. The builder was cursed; but this prevented not the city from becoming a flourishing and prosperous town.

JOSHUA VII. 1-15.—In this chapter we have the dire

retribution laid upon him who was unfaithful to God's commission; and it was not the compassion which spared the devoted lives, but the avarice which appropriated the forbidden goods of the Canaanites, that prompted the disobedience of Achan. There was here given another demonstration of that immediate Theocracy under which the children of Israel were placed—both in the defeat at Ai, and in the direct converse of the great Jehovah Himself with Joshua both on the occasion and the cure. Achan's accursed thing is now a matter of proverbial import and application. It should teach us not to estimate the malignity of sin by the material dimensions of its subject, and to be careful lest, by the admission of a vitiating flaw, we should taint and transform into the utterly corrupt and worthless what but for it might have been a great and glorious performance. It operates with deadly mischief, though materially small, like the dead fly in a pot of precious ointment.

16-26.—We have in this passage the detection and confession and signal punishment of the wretched Achan. The discovery was arrived at by lot, the disposal whereof is of the Lord. The accordance of its intimations with the acknowledgment of the poor culprit himself, verified by actual observation, was another display of the miraculous and the divine—another of those exhibitions which were so multiplied in these days to keep the wayward and the rebellious children of Israel from the evil heart of unbelief. The goodly Babylonish garment indicates a rich manufacture in the East, and the luxury and wealth which were attained even at that early period. Of the coinage that obtained at that time we read in still earlier periods. The mysterious part of this severity is the execution of the

dread sentence not on Achan only, but on his sons and daughters, and all the property, whether live or otherwise, that belonged to him—another example in the detail of what the great human family suffered by the transgression of Adam—inexplicable certainly in the absolute sense of the word, but not more so than the numerous instances of the same administration before our eyes, and of which we read in Butler's Analogy.

JOSHUA VIII. 1-12.—The punishment of Achan took away the displeasure of God, and He changed defeat into victory. This is a remarkable example of God's disciplinary administration, and may well be appealed to as of a piece with that economy by which chastisements for sin are made to prepare the way for such temporal blessings as in consequence of that sin have been withdrawn and withheld for a period. There is one distinction between Jericho and Ai—that whereas in the former all the cattle also were destroyed, (ch. vi. 21,) in the latter they were allowed to take these unto themselves.... The power of God to achieve the conquest of Ai, nay, His determination that it should thus be, did not supersede the tactics of Joshua. He took the means for obtaining possession of the city—yet was it the Lord his God who delivered it into his hand. The seeming discrepancy between verse 3 and verse 12, as to the number who composed the ambush, may be variously reconciled.

13-29.—Stratagems in war, though a species of deception, are not, it would seem, unlawful. There are other deceptions which appear to have a countenance in the Old Testament, and which conflict more with one's moral apprehensions. This stretching out of a spear by Joshua

was not, I should think, by way of a signal, for I do not see how it could be observed by the people in ambush, unless there was a line of watchmen all round. It seems rather to have been like the lifting up of Moses' arms when a battle was fought, and visibly marked the presence and power of God as being with Israel. See verse 26, where we read that the spear was stretched till the work of conquest and destruction was consummated. The children, I presume, were included in the destruction of the inhabitants of Ai, though men and women only are mentioned. The vestiges of this war must have abidden long afterwards—the ruins of Ai could be appealed to at the time when the book of Joshua was written. Even the heap of stones cast on the dead body of the king could still be pointed out. Such notices as might help to fix the chronology of the various books of Scripture are peculiarly valuable.

30-35.—An intermediate method of sacrifices was allowed previous to the settlement of Israel. These sacrifices, as also the writing of the law, are enjoined in Deut xxvii. 3, &c.—the very mountain on which the monumental inscription was raised being there specified. It is likely that the engraving on the stones, or rather on the plaster, was confined to the Decalogue. The blessings and the cursings were, moreover, read according to all that Moses had before commanded. These readings of course imply writings; and it does give one the comfort of feeling that there was a secure transmission of what was said and done in the earlier to the later times of the Jewish history; and the frequency of these public readings serves to augment our confidence. No history has been better guarded, or had so many guarantees for its truth planted along the

line of it, than the histories recorded in the Old and New Testaments. This congregational reading to the people of all ages carries onward the tradition of former ages from generation to generation.... It would have been satisfactory had the intimation been here given that the inscribed monument at Ebal was extant when the book of Joshua was written.

JOSHUA IX. 1-14.—The fame and the consternation of these victories spread most readily and naturally over the whole land of Canaan; and the emotion is described with the greatest possible verisimilitude, so as to mark the perfect simplicity and good faith of the narrator.... Gibeon, it would appear from verse 7, was a town of the Hivites. Joshua was not protected by any miraculous interposal from the deceit which was practised upon him. There seems to have been a culpable negligence on the part of the Israelites. They asked not counsel of the Lord how to act in the matter. They had their suspicions, yet allayed them by taking of the victuals of the Gibeonites, probably with the view of examining them, and so ascertaining whether or not their state warranted the truth of their story. And so, instead of committing the matter to God, they leant upon their own understanding. It is interesting to notice how well acquainted they were with the previous history of their invaders.

15-27.—It was natural, but I fear natural cruelty, in the children of Israel, to grudge as they did the lives of the Gibeonites. Rather let me hope that it was natural avarice, or some other principle which overbore the revolt of the mind against slaughter, than a real delight in the slaughter itself. We read afterwards of the Gibeonites

in the days of David, when God avenged the slaughter of them by Saul by sending a famine upon the land. We may be sure that the slaughter of them now, when the guilt would have been aggravated by the perfidious violation of a recent oath, would have been alike offensive to the God of truth. One cannot think hardly of the very natural deceit to which the Gibeonites resorted for the saving of their lives. I am not aware of any further reference to them in the history of the Israelites, save the one now made. They are said, however, to have been the Nethinims whom David gave to the Levites, (Ezra viii. 20,) even as God gave the Levites for the service of the priests. They were appointed for the servile work of the holy things. Their appointed locality was the place which the Lord should choose—that is, the place where the temple was to be raised—the place where the rites of the altar were performed, and the congregation assembled for the worship, and other solemn ordinances prescribed by the law of Moses.

*June, 1843.*

JOSHUA X. 1-7.—There must have been a great subdivision of power and territory in those days; or rather they must not have advanced far in the way of extension towards such kingdoms and authorities as now obtain in the world. That the consequent fear which ensued on the voluntary surrender of Gibeon, should have acted as a cementing principle on others, was most natural. When Gibeon is said to be as one of the royal cities—it would appear as if the capitals where kings resided were distinguished by their superior greatness; and Gibeon was not one of such, for we do not read of a king in Gibeon, but as one of such—as great as a royal city. Ai had a king,



and it was greater than Ai. The attempt of the combined kings was against Gibeon, which had gone over to the invaders. The effect of their sending to Israel for help, took off from the character of the invasion as being a continued series of positive aggressions: it somewhat relieved and mitigated this aspect. No doubt the Israelites were the great primary and wholesale aggressors; but, looked to in detail, the combined kings were the aggressors in this particular instance.

8-14.—Mark the frequency of the direct communications from the Lord to Joshua, and by which he was signalized. The shower of hailstones was miraculous; and in regard to the much-controverted miracle of the sun and moon standing still, I can have no doubt that it was literally so to the effect of the sun-dial being stationary, which leaves room for the speculation that it may have been by atmospherical refraction, or in other ways. I am not so staggered by this narrative as to feel dependent on the usual explanations. I accept of it in the popular and effective sense—having no doubt that, to all intents and purposes of that day's history, the sun and the moon did stand still, the one resting over Gibeon, the other in the valley of Ajalon. Still more interesting to me is the reference here made to the book of Jasher. It is uncertain whether Jasher be a proper name, or if it signify a book of integrity—an authentic book of Hebrew annals. It may have been identical with the book of the wars of the Lord referred to in Num. xxi. 14. Whether or not, it is well to know that there were common as well as inspired histories of the events of these early periods—the former not preserved, because not in such value or demand as the latter. The miracle, at all events, was a

most stupendous one; and the prayer of Joshua which called for it, must indeed have been a prayer of faith. What he said was hazarded in the sight of Israel, and its fulfilment as palpably in their sight must have strengthened their confidence in their leader.

15-27.—“Smite the hindmost of them.” Smite all whom you overtake; make a full end of them, and suffer them not to enter into their garrisons. But though this was their aim, it was not entirely accomplished. A remainder did make good their escape into fenced cities. Some think that not one of the Israelites sustained any hurt at all; and a dumb terror laid hold of the people of the land because of them. Their enraged enemies had not only not the power to do any of them harm, but were struck with silence, and could not even utter any invective against them—awe-struck as it were by the visitation of their coming fate.... The humiliations practised on the poor kings savour of war’s barbarism, however much they may be explained by war’s policy. The captains of the Israelitish army would take the encouragement of Joshua’s address, after that by his order they had put their feet on the necks of the kings. The stones at the cave’s mouth where the corpses were laid, would form another monument of the wars and conquests of this great invasion.

28-43.—Joshua proceeds in the work of conquest and extermination. I regret that I have not Robinson by me, to ascertain the light which may be thrown on the geography of these movements.\* It is said that he did unto Makkedah and Libnah as he had done unto Jericho. But at Jericho he destroyed the cattle as well as the people. But it is not expressly said here that the cattle

\* The BIBLICAL RESEARCHES had been lent to a friend.—ED

were destroyed; while, on the other hand, there is an exception made of these in the case of Ai. It might only then have been in the destruction of the people that the towns of this chapter experienced the same treatment with Jericho. The description of these successive conquests brings us to Hebron, south of Jerusalem. I understand the region from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza. The Goshen here spoken of is not the Goshen of Egypt, but the Goshen of ch. xi. 16, and ch. xv. 51. It was a city, though with a circumjacent territory.... The description of verse 41 seems to include both the length and breadth of the conquests. The whole history of this passage is taken up with the successive captures of cities, and the destruction of their inhabitants, save when variegated by the overthrow of an auxiliary force under Horam king of Gezer, who along with his people shared in the utter extermination.

JOSHUA XI. 1-13.—The work proceeds, and is carried forward with relentless fidelity to the commandment of God by Moses.... The multitude of kings here spoken of evinces the exceeding smallness of their respective territories, though with immense populations; and these, as is obvious from the state of their warlike equipments and preparations, far advanced beyond the state of barbarism. We meet first here with the order given to hough the horses of their enemies. We read frequently of an interdiction laid on their confidence in horses, and the rebuke of the Israelites because of their trust in the horses of Egypt. It seems to have been a species of warfare which God discouraged in the Israelites.... Jabin, the king of Hazza, seems to have held a supremacy over the other

kings; and he was singled out for an extraordinary treatment—his city being burnt, whereas the others that remained entire were spared. In chasing the confederate forces unto great Zidon, Joshua must have come in sight of the Mediterranean, of which no mention is yet made in the history of this invasion.

14-23.—Though the horses were disabled, the cattle were spared and appropriated for the use of the captors; while, in rigid execution of the Divine commandment, they carried into full effect the bidden extermination of the people.... There is a Hermon in the Lebanon range greatly north of Jerusalem; but I have the impression of another Hermon, though I do not see how the valley of Lebanon should come in along with it. A complete Scripture Geography is a great desideratum; and I must again possess myself of Robinson. By this time, however, Joshua may have made nearly the entire conquest of the land—for we read, in the next enumeration, of Jerusalem, and probably ulterior places which Joshua had taken possession of. He made war, it is said, a long time ere he effected this.... The Lord's part in hardening the hearts of the Canaanites, even as He had hardened Pharaoh king of Egypt, is strikingly brought in. And thus the fate which came upon them was at once the absolute result of God's sovereignty, yet the proximate result of their own obstinacy.

JOSHUA XII. 1-6.—There now follows a list of the places which had been conquered, with their kings; and first of those on the east side of Jordan. It should be observed, that this east side is called the other side of Jordan—marking the situation of the writer to have been on

the west side, as was that of the great majority of the public to whom he addressed himself—the bulk and body of the Jewish people. The river Arnon was on the Moabite side of Jordan, marking the place of the earliest, as did Hermon of Lebanon that of the latest conquest. The general description of the land, as lying between Arnon and Hermon, marks these as the extreme boundaries. There were only two kings whose territories were taken from them on the east of Jordan—Sihon of the Amorites and Og of Bashan—the latter north of the former. The general geographical features of these countries are very distinct in one's memory as well as in the map.

7-24.—The kings on the west of Jordan are far more numerous; and the territory is marked out as by its extreme points of termination from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon on the north, to the mount Halak on the south, towards the land of Edom. This whole country is also described according to its natural features; and they are amply made out by the whole character and appearance of Palestine still, as made up of mountains, and valleys, and plains, and springs, and wilderness. The south country, too, as lying in that direction from Jerusalem, had an importance and an individuality enough to authorize for it this special designation. The places here enumerated do not seem to be set before us in geographical order; Ai, which is beyond Beth-el, being placed second in the catalogue, and Beth-el towards the end of it. I should have liked some reference to the Great Sea in these statements of places. Is Jokneam of Carmel a maritime place, as Carmel itself is, at least the Carmel still recognised by that name—the Carmel on which stood the prophet Elijah?

JOSHUA XIII. 1-6.—Though the history of these transactions be short, yet the transactions themselves took up the great part of a lifetime. Joshua was now old and stricken in years; and yet the conquest of Canaan was far from being completed. The Philistines, in particular, who were so long thorns in the side of the house of Israel, were still unsubdued. Tares were suffered to remain along with the wheat; and the general purposes of God in the intermixture of the evil with the good over the world at large, were served and exemplified in a remarkable manner in the land of Israel—at once to prove the righteous and to punish the rebellious generation of that people who underwent so many and such wayward moral fluctuations. They seem never to have taken full possession of the land that was allotted to them; though I have a strong impression that all the promises and prophecies on their behalf will yet be literally fulfilled—and more particularly, that they will obtain full occupation, and in all its extent, of the land that was originally destined for them, even from the Mediterranean or Great Sea to the great river, or Euphrates. Much of the land not yet conquered was divided, with the promise that its inhabitants should be driven out afterwards.

7-14.—There now follows the division of this conquered territory among the tribes of Israel. It was gotten by conquest, but divided for an inheritance among the families of the conquerors. But though the main purport of what follows is to describe the allotments of the nine and a half tribes, he recurs to the divisions of the country already assigned to the two and a half tribes on the other side of Jordan. Joshua does not divide anew this country, but leaves it with the two tribes and a half, “even as



Moses gave it to them." However, he describes their respective portions very particularly, not as what Joshua gave, but as what Moses gave. It seems that here, too, the conquest of the land was not completed, and that some of the original inhabitants (the Geshurites and the Maachathites) still continued to dwell with the Israelites.... It is here repeated that no inheritance was given to the tribe of Levi, they having their livelihood assigned to them from tithes and the offerings of the people.

15-33.—He begins with the description of Reuben's territory, as laid down and assigned, not by Joshua but Moses—"and Moses gave," &c.... It is interesting to mark the frequent resemblance of the present to the ancient names. Thus Arair now for Aroer formerly, marking the situation of Arnon; Diban for Dibon; Madeba for Medeba; Hasbon for Heshbon. These instances are taken from the map of Palestine in Kitto's Biblical Cyclopædia. There are many others, as Beth-jeshimoth, Kirjathaim, &c., which seem to have undergone little or no change. I shall find this map, now only come into my possession, very useful in tracing my way through the descriptions of the Book of Joshua, and of the Old Testament in general. They make clear the general distribution of the tribes on the east of Jordan, that is, Reuben on the south, then Gad northward, and lastly, the half tribe of Manasseh with the Maachathites and the Geshurites on the extreme north, who remained unconquered. With a retrospect of the past division of this country there is also mixed up a retrospect of one or two of its past events—as the former reign of Sihon and the slaughter of Balaam. The exclusion of the Levites from the ordinary inheritance of the other tribes is also repeated.

JOSHUA XIV.—The narrative proceeds now to the division of the territory on the west side of Jordan among the nine tribes and a half. The division was by lot in reference to the tribes, I presume, as well as to the separate families of each. Joshua and Eleazar the High Priest were the head distributors, while the chief men of each tribe also were present for their respective interests at the distribution. The tribes among whom this allocation was made still numbered twelve, notwithstanding the exclusion of the tribe of Levi, by Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph, each representing a tribe.

The venerable worthy Caleb is here introduced as coming along with his own tribe, and claiming the promise of the land that had been made to him forty-five years before. His recital is a very touching one; and the garrulity of the hale old man truly interesting.—Give us grace like him to follow the Lord fully.... It would appear that, even after the allotment, much was left for the assignees to do in the way of driving out the enemy; and so Caleb undertakes to clear his portion, or drive out the Canaanites from it, who still had occupancy there. The interview between Joshua and Caleb must have been one of affecting recognition, and it is to be hoped of strong mutual friendliness and regard.

JOSHUA XV. 1-4.—That the lot was for tribes as well as families is at once evident from the entry on the description of Judah's portion. And one can follow very clearly the delineation of the south border. The bay of the Salt Sea that looketh southward, is that bay which vergeth southward from its mouth, and supposes the spectator to look inwardly, and not outwardly, as from the heights on

the west side of the Dead Sea towards its southern extremity. Maaleh-acrabbim forcibly suggests the precipices which cross the river that runs into the Dead Sea from the south. Thence the way to Zin, and more particularly to Kadesh-barnea, seems quite patent. The river of Egypt, often, if not generally dry, I believe is Sihor, the mouth of which is on the coast of the Mediterranean. The desert of Zin is a narrow stripe, from the Salt Sea to the gulf of Akaba, whereas the desert of Paran lies to the west, and the south border of Judah crossed the northern part of it.

5-12.—The east border of Judah is of very brief description, being altogether a natural boundary—even the Salt Sea. By the end of Jordan we are to understand the mouth of Jordan, whence springs the north border, that is, from the bay of the Salt Sea into which Jordan discharges itself. Beth-hogla, Beth-arabah, and Gilgal, have still places in our maps—the first of these is said to be ascertained. The stone of Bohan was probably set up to commemorate some exploit of a Reubenite, which tribe had all its possessions on the other side of Jordan, but accompanied their brethren to the wars of Canaan. The valley lay between Jericho and Ai. This north border touched close upon Jerusalem, the greater part of which was in the lot of Benjamin. Kirjath-jearim is in the map, as is also Timnah or Thamna. Ekron is quite palpable, as is also Jabneel or Jamma; but can this be Jabneel on the sea, where the north border terminates? The west border is also a natural boundary—being the Mediterranean. Almost, if not all the region of the Philistines was in the lot of Judah.

13-19.—What that noble veteran Caleb claimed of Joshua at the time of the division, is here made good to

him. It is here mentioned for the first time, that God commanded Joshua to assign the land which was requested of him by Caleb. And Caleb fulfilled his purpose of driving out its original inhabitants. The Lord was with him, and kept him in strength for achieving the conquest and expulsion of his enemies. The portion of Caleb must have been of considerable extent, for Debir is marked at a considerable distance from Hebron, to the south-west of it . . . Achsah wished her husband to request an additional piece of land, for the sake of its water-springs, which Othniel did not do in his own person, putting it upon Achsah—perhaps, however, with his own sanction, to make the request herself. Caleb at all events complied, and with great generosity—giving both a higher and a lower ground, with springs of water in each of them. The blessing which Achsah requested was not a mere benediction, but a gift—not a declaratory blessing alone, but an effective one. Othniel and Achsah were cousins. We read afterwards of Othniel as one of the judges of Israel. It supports the credit of a history when its distant passages are in keeping with and illustrate each other.

20-32.—The general description of the portion of Judah is followed by an enumeration of its cities. However uninteresting these names may be to a common reader, yet points of evidence and illustration may be obtained by the comparison of them with other places in Scripture where they occur, and where, if they exhibit a consistent geography, it serves to impress a character of truthfulness on the whole. Thus at a great distance in point of time does Kabzeel present itself with a slight change of name in Neh. xi. 25, as one of the cities of Judah, and Eder long before in Gen. xxxv. 21, when Jacob travelled southward

from Bethlehem; and Ziph, in 1 Sam. xxiii. 14, &c., whither David fled from the persecutions of Saul; and Telem, in 1 Sam. xv. 4, when Saul numbered the army that he led against Amalek to the south of Judah; and Moladah and Beth-palet, in Neh. xi. 26, with just such a change in the latter name as one might look for in the lapse of the intervening generations. There is a positive enjoyment in thus harmonizing and confirming one part of Scripture by another. We have only given a few of the specimens; and we would further recommend an examination of the most authoritative maps, with a view to fix the localities in one's mind. Each city here named seems to have had a township or country attached to it, comprehending so many villages not reckoned worthy of being named.

33-47.—He now enters on the description of another of fourteen cities with their villages, to distinguish them from the nine-and-twenty uttermost cities of the tribe, toward the coast of Edom southwards. The fourteen seem to have been all in the valley. They number fifteen, but Gederah and Gederothaim may have been parts of the same city. The next two groupes of sixteen and nine are not characterized by any general property—though one would think they must have been placed together, because of their contiguity or common site and quarter. After these we have three cities of the Philistines, each mentioned singly with their towns and villages—their respective territories being probably larger than that of any of the separate cities before enumerated; or, at least, there being a wider gradation of places attached to each, so that each has its subordinate towns as well as villages. Besides these three cities of the Philistines, there is a space between Ekron and the sea mentioned, which lay near to Ashdod, not



signalized by any city as its metropolis, but having towns and villages.

48-63.—Goshen among the mountains had a territory like the others, which when called the land of Goshen is apt to be confounded with the Goshen in Egypt. These mountains form the water-shed between the Mediterranean and Jordan or the Dead Sea. Carmel was a city in a different region from Mount Carmel. Can the Ziph of verse 55 be different from the Ziph of verse 24? The one in this passage must be that to the east of Hebron and not far from Carmel, and in the wilderness of Ziph between Hebron and the Dead Sea. The other, like Talem and Hazor and Bealoth, &c., wherewith it is grouped, may have been on the south border of Judah. The Kirjaths seem to have been a prefix to older names superseded by more recent ones, as Hebron for Kirjath-arba, Debir for Kirjath-sannah, &c., though Kirjath-baal was succeeded by Kirjath-jearim. The wilderness of verse 61 may have been part of or adjoining to the wilderness of Ziph. The En-gedi of ancient times, one of its cities, is the Ain-jidy of the present day.... Does not the last verse of this passage prove that the book of Joshua was written anterior to the full occupation of Jerusalem by the Israelites? It was probably long anterior to the time of David.

JOSHUA XVI.—The portions of Ephraim and Manasseh lay contiguous to each other, the latter north of the former; and both stretching east and west from Jordan to the Mediterranean. Ephraim was north of Benjamin. The wilderness to the east of Jericho consists of the uplands on both sides of the water-shed. The particular



description of the border does not distinctly accord with the different maps. Beth-el seems to be in Benjamin. Ataroth does not appear to be mentioned in place; but Luz, Gezer, and Beth-horon are abundantly near to the confines of the tribe. Ataroth-addar is distinct from Ataroth. But this looks as if there were two Ataroths. Taanath-shiloh, Janohah, one of the Ataroths, and Naarath, fix, with tolerable accuracy, the north-east border. Tappuah and the river Kanah together mark pretty well the north border. . . . We are not, I think, to understand from verse 5, that all Ephraim's cities were within the border of Manasseh; but that there were separate cities in the latter which were assigned to Manasseh . . . . The number of places where the Canaanites had not yet been driven out "unto this day," point to an early day for the writing of the book of Joshua.

JOSHUA XVII.—Machir is called the first-born of Manasseh—yet I cannot discover any other sons of his; and if the descendants of Gilead had Gilead and Bashan alone, who are the "rest of the children of Manasseh?" For neither do we read of any other sons to Machir than Gilead. There is to my own mind an obscurity in this matter, which I will not stop to unravel . . . . The portion of Manasseh on this side of Jordan lay to the north of that of Ephraim. Michmethah and Shechem are both on the south side of the river Kanah, and should therefore be in the tribe of Ephraim. En-tappuah is the fountain of Tappuah-Ain. Manasseh had the land of the city Tappuah; but Ephraim had the city itself. It was the coast of Ephraim which lay south of Kanah. There is a great difficulty in reconciling verse 10 with the relative positions of Issachar and Asher. Ephraim had a number of separate cities

which lay within the portion of Manasseh; and Manasseh had both cities and towns, countries in fact, within the territory of Issachar.... There seems here to have been a joint representation from Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. Joshua first bids them clear out what they had already gotten; and then either consents to give them more, or encourages them by the hope of their being able to drive out the Canaanites, after which they would see that their united portions came to more than but one lot for one tribe, but was enough both for Ephraim and the half of Manasseh.

JOSHUA XVIII. 1-10.—Shiloh, north of Jerusalem, and marked within the territory of Ephraim.... Though the land was subdued, the ancient people were not wholly extirpated. This delay on the part of seven tribes may have arisen from their indulgence of present luxury and ease, while they lived on the spoil they had taken. Their first settlement on the lands they had desolated, implied hard work. Joshua had therefore to urge them that they should take immediate measures for entering on their possession. The tribes of Judah and Joseph were already disposed of, and the relative position of their territories is accurately stated.... The surveyors whom he sent had to divide the remaining land into seven parts—but the distribution of these parts was to be determined by lot. They perhaps admitted of being either expanded or contracted in their boundary-line, according as they fell to the share of more or less populous tribes; and, at all events, the inequality could be repaired by assigning cities, and even territories, to one tribe within the confines of another. The lots were cast in Shiloh, *before the*

*Lord*, to whom belongs the whole disposal thereof.—(Prov. xvi. 33.)

11-28.—The lot of Benjamin lay immediately to the north of Judah; and its boundaries can be traced from the description given of it in this passage. The north boundary was some way north of Jericho, having sprung from the Jordan, and passing westwards to Beth-aven. It then passed to the north of Beth-el, and included Beth-el. Beth-horon seems distinct enough; but there is a difference in the maps regarding Ataroth-addar. It did not come near the Mediterranean; and, therefore, by its compassing the sea southward, may be meant that it enclosed the lake or waters of Gibeon. (Jer. xli. 12.) Nephtoah is marked a little westward of Jerusalem, which last seems to have been partially if not wholly included in the tribe of Benjamin. En-shemesh, Geliloth, Bohan, and Beth-arabah, with Beth-hoglah, have all places in my map; and the mouth of Jordan, with the river itself, a good way up, saves all mistake as to the east boundary. The cities are here given in two groupes; and a good many of them are presented to us in the ordinary maps.

JOSHUA XIX. 1-9.—Simeon was the least noted of the tribes. The lots were first laid down by human survey and calculation, and afterwards disposed of by God. The lot of Judah was probably found to exceed the proportion of what they reckoned on as the whole extent of the land; and so having got more than its share, they partitioned out of it another portion for a tribe, which, on being put anew to the lot, fell to Simeon. This brought on a juxtaposition and close neighbourhood between Judah and Simeon, of which we can discern the traces

in Judges i. 3, and in 2 Chron. xv. 9, where we are told that many of this tribe, as also of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, likewise near to Judah, that they fell in abundance to Asa out from the tribes of revolted Israel. Benjamin indeed was so very close upon Judah, that the two tribes were identified in a manner. There is no delineation here of Simeon's boundaries; but there is an enumeration of its towns or cities, most of which are to be found in the ordinary maps, and the second groupe of them distinctly by themselves. The Philistines lay along and within the east border of Simeon. There is none of Simeon's towns which our general recollections of Scripture history suggest as of any note but Beer-sheba and Ziklag.

10-16.—The border of Zebulun is described. It lay in Galilee, and extended from the lake of Tiberias to the Mediterranean. It lay next, not to Manasseh, which had been already described, but to Issachar, which lay between them, and was not yet described. Maralah, Dabbasheth, and Jokneam are all marked. The river before Jokneam might have been the celebrated Kishon, which had its rise near Samaria. So much for the boundary from Sarid westward to the Great Sea. Then, at verse 12, starting from the same Sarid eastward, we observe in our maps Chisloth-tabor, Daberath, and Japhia. The sea of Galilee, though not mentioned, forms part of its eastern boundary—while Gittah-hepher, Remmon-methear, and Neah appear at least on the eastern half of it. Hannathon is decidedly on the north—while the remaining towns which complete the enumeration lie chiefly in the interior. The places belonging to Zebulun which awaken the most interesting reminiscences are Beth-lehom, and Tabor, and Nazareth.

**17-23.**—The tribe of Issachar also traversed the whole breadth of Palestine on this side of Jordan—that is from Jordan itself to the Great Sea. It lay between Zebulun and Manasseh, and held within its boundaries several detached portions of territory belonging to the latter tribe. The most remarkable of these lay along the coast of the Mediterranean, between Issachar and Zebulun. Jezreel is marked as belonging to Manasseh. The border is not described very geographically—for though the towns first mentioned lie near to the border all round, yet some of the rest are far in the interior of this tribe's territory. The names here given compose a list of the principal towns. The most remarkable of them are Shunem, where the widow lived who entertained Elisha. But beside those presented to us here, we observe that, according to the maps, there lay within this tribe Nain and Cesarea and Beth-shemesh and Hadadrimmon, as also the mountains of Megiddo. The Kishon—the river Kishon, from near to its source and a great way downwards, forms the boundary between this tribe and Zebulun. It is not Kishon, but a tributary to it, as large as itself, which has its origin in the pool of Samaria.

**24-39.**—Asher was the most northerly tribe on the coast, and included by lot at least, if not by actual possession, the famous towns of Tyre and Zidon. I can recognise in the maps Helkath and Achshaph and Alamelech and Misheal. Carmel is marked as out of Asher to the westward, and belonging to that part of Manasseh which lies between Zebulun and Issachar. I further recognise toward the sun-rising from the places before described, Beth-dagon, in which direction we fall in with Zebulun, whence turning to the left northward we have



Neiel, and Cabul, and Hebron, and Beth-rehob, and Hammon and Kanah till we reach Zidon. This tribe has Zebulun on its south and Naphtali on its east. Its Hebron is distinct from the more famous Hebron on the south of Jerusalem. Achzib is still called Ez-zib; and Accho in Judges i. 31, the famous Acre. There was much, however, of this coast that though assigned to the Asherites was never acquired by them. Naphtali was to the east of Asher, and north of the sea of Galilee. Its eastern boundary was Jordan above that sea. The Judah upon Jordan which it had upon the east, was probably a city of that name. These attachments of the same name to distinct places are not rare, as Hebron, and I think Beth-shemesh. Capernaum and Bethsaida were both in this tribe. It lay conterminous to Manasseh beyond Jordan. Hukkok is in Asher, but the south coast of Naphtali, as described from east to west, goeth to Hukkok. The fenced cities are particularly mentioned, and were probably much prized as a defence on the northern frontiers of Israel.

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40-51.—Dan was on the sea-coast, to the north of Simeon and west of Judah. What is here set forth as the points of its coast, is in fact a list of towns scattered over the whole face of the territory. It is most interesting to recognise in the Japho of verse 46, the modern Joppa—still named by the natives Jaffa or Yaffa. The country names are those which best serve to identify the Scriptural towns of Palestine. The possessions of this tribe were much intermingled with those of the Philistines; and accordingly, Dan had much to do with the lot that was assigned to it—nor does it ever seem to have done the work completely. Gath and Ekron and Ashdod lay within



the allotted portion of this tribe—noted towns of the Philistines. . . . The assignation of a distinct property to Joshua, formed a right and graceful conclusion to this whole process of division. He was the General Washington of his countrymen, and like him well entitled to spend the remainder of his days in affluence and honours, and transmit a stable and territorial possession to his family. Timnath-serah is in the south-west of the range styled the mountains of Ephraim.

JOSHUA XX.—I should have mentioned in the last day's comment, that the capture of Leshem by the Danites, though adverted to in the book of Joshua, did not take place till afterwards, as is related in Judges xviii. Dan, formerly Leshem, is in the tribe of Naphtali, very near the north boundary of Palestine—so as that the country when described as from Dan to Beer-sheba, takes in the whole land of Israel. . . . For the termination of the man-slayer's residence in the cities of refuge, and the conditions both of his ingress and egress thence, see Num. xxxv. &c. The three cities of refuge on the side of Gilead, we have already seen to be evenly distributed from north to south; and so, too, were the cities on this side of Jordan—Hebron in the tribe of Judah, and a good way south from Jerusalem—Shechem, in mount Ephraim, lying within the tribe of Ephraim, and on the north side of the range designated as the mountains of Ephraim—and lastly, Kedesh, in the tribe of Naphtali, and on the north-west extremity of the mountains of Naphtali.

JOSHUA XXI. 1-4.—Before the board of distribution broke up and separated, and as if at the termination of

their sittings in Shiloh, the Levites put in for their share, consisting not of lands but of cities—and these taken from what had been previously assigned to the other tribes. God first gave them a certain amount of property, and then put them on the exercise of a principle, by claiming from them a certain part for the maintenance of His own special service. He made it first theirs, and then called for so much of it back again. The Levites pled the commandment given to Moses for cities with their suburbs; and the children of Israel gave, it is said, what was thus called for, at the commandment of the Lord. In the allocation of these cities, there were four lots cast for the three divisions or families of the tribe of Levi—the children of Kohath, who was descended from Aaron, the only Levites who were priests, having one lot, and the remaining children of Kohath, who ranked only with the Levites, even though the descendants of Moses were amongst them, having another. It was well that the tribe of Judah, with the conterminous tribes of Benjamin and Simeon, should have harboured the priests who were thus placed near to and round about Jerusalem. The hand of the Lord may be seen in the ordering and disposal of this lot.

5-12.—The remaining children of Kohath were not placed far from their brethren the priests—there having fallen to their share the contiguous tribes of Dan and Ephraim and half Manasseh. There is an exception to the principle of contiguity among those of the same leading family, in that the tribe of Zebulun, which was assigned to the children of Merari, comes between Issachar and Asher, assigned to the children of Gershon. Both of these families held possessions on both sides of Jordan. We find in the previous chapter, that when cities are spoken of as

assigned to the other tribes, it is generally cities and their *villages*, marking out each city as the capital of a certain amount of country, strewed with smaller towns or villages. Whereas the only addition made to the cities assigned to the priests and Levites, is "cities with their *suburbs*," which probably comprehended as much land as sufficed for the maintenance of their cattle. This land, however, must have been distinct from the more distant land on which the villages lay, and which formed the subordinate territory of the capital town or city. And accordingly, while told that the children of Aaron had Hebron, with the suburbs thereof, Caleb retained possession of the fields of the city and the villages thereof. The suburbs may have formed a circumambient space close around the city, and which served not for the lodging only, but feeding of the cattle of the Levites.

13-26.—It should be remarked, that the priests and Levites obtained possession of all the cities of refuge. Hebron, a city of priests, as one of those given to the children of Aaron, was made the city of refuge for the south of Palestine. Most, if not all of the cities in the enumeration of those given to the priests, will be found in the lists of the fifteenth chapter, where you have a full catalogue of the cities given to the three tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. On a rapid survey of the number of cities assigned to these tribes, it would appear that the thirteen given to the Levites, form nearly a tithe of those belonging in the gross to the three tribes. I can see neither Anathoth nor Almon in the original allotment of cities to Benjamin. There seems no full enumeration of the cities given to Ephraim; but Shechem within its territory was another of the cities of refuge, and would

accommodate middle Palestine. There seems a perfect accordance in the two lists for Dan. There seem to have been two Gath-rimmons, one in Dan, and the other in the half-tribe of Manasseh.

27-45.—Golan in the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan is the third-mentioned city of refuge, and Kedesh in Galilee the fourth, which last would accommodate north Palestine, even as Golan did north Gilead, as Ramoth did its middle, and Bezer, though not here expressly specified as a city of refuge, served for the southern region of the country belonging to the Israelites and beyond Jordan. It is well to remark the distribution of ecclesiastical men which took place over the land of Judea, having their head-quarters in the cities assigned to them, but drawn upon, no doubt, from all the surrounding vicinities, for sacred, and literary, and educational services—a noble provision of agency for the higher objects of human existence, and laying an impressive mockery on the stinted and parsimonious allowance of our modern utilitarianism. . . . The Lord did indeed make out His promise with all faithfulness to the children of Israel—yet not to the extent of the utter extermination, but at least to the utter subjugation at the time, of their enemies; or if not even thus much, to the extent of their own personal and complete security, though in the midst of them. Whatever befell them short of this was due to their own shortcomings in duty, and not to any straitness in Him whose hand was never so shortened that it could not or would not save all who had respect unto His commandments.

JOSHUA XXII. 1-8.—It is well to read of the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, having so rightly acquitted

themselves, and of the unqualified approbation they received from Joshua. It is also delightful to observe, in the terms of the charge which he laid upon them, how much, after all, the spirit of the earlier is at one with that of the later dispensation—it being the first article of the commandment and law which Moses left behind him, that they should love the Lord their God, and that their whole obedience should be rendered with all their heart and all their soul.... The benediction of Joshua to the transjordanite brethren must have fallen very genially upon their ears. He seems to have repeated this benediction in a more special manner to the half-tribe of Manasseh, and in terms of encouragement which, perhaps, they required, seeing that they were to be separated from their brethren of the other half. The direction about the parting of the spoil is understood by Poole in the sense of their dividing it with the brethren who were left behind, and to whom they were on the eve of returning.

9-20.—There was the semblance of their going to forfeit their fair fame, but it happily turned out a semblance; and they got to their homes with unstained reputation. They must have crossed Jordan, it is thought, in boats; and the altar erected by them seems to have been on their own side of the river, although in verse 10 it is said that they built it *there*, or when they had gone no farther than to the borders of Jordan, “in the land of Canaan.” But we take our information rather from verse 11, and conceive the altar to have been erected over against Canaan, more especially as the conception that it was intended for sacrifices was far more natural, on the supposition of its being built in an accessible place on their own territory. The promptitude wherewith the Israelites

assembled to put it down, evinces the freshness and vigour of their loyalty to God, and which subsided so lamentably afterwards. The powerful remonstrance which they lifted up on that occasion, shows how alive they were at this time to the obligations of duty, and to the danger as well as guilt of violating them. They make them welcome to come back to Canaan and take part of it with themselves, rather than that they should build an altar separate from that Shiloh which was the only authorized one, and intended for the common benefit of them all.

21-34.—The Reubenites and Gadites obviously heard this remonstrance with emotion, as is evident from the repetition of God's holy name at the outset of their reply. They made a full vindication of their proceeding—the altar which they had built being not sacrificial but commemorative, and intended not to divert them from the authorized altar but to point their way to it. Their tradition of this purpose would serve as a safeguard against the defection of their posterity, which would be further strengthened by the record of it here inserted in the book of Joshua. This earnest protestation from the two and a half tribes was evidently made in a spirit of deep sincerity and earnestness, and had its right corresponding influence on the minds of Phinehas and the other dignitaries. Altogether it was a memorable and great transaction, and one which served to mark the strength of that principle which obtained on both sides in regard to the exclusive reverence due to that altar and that place which God had fixed upon for His special service. It indicates the still vigorous and unbroken loyalty of that age to Him who had selected the Israelites for the subjects of His own peculiar Theocracy. The best token of



God being among us, in the language of Phinehas, is that He keeps us from sin. One can feel a most pleasurable sympathy with the gladness of the people when told that all was right.

JOSHUA XXIII.—Good and great old Joshua now makes a most graceful exit from his earthly pilgrimage—we doubt not from the Canaan below, to the heavenly and everlasting Canaan. He lets the people know at a general convocation that their task was not yet done, referring to the nations that remained, and which had also been made over by lot to them, as well as to the nations which had been cut off. He promises their full and final subjugation; and if historically the matter fell short of this, it was not because God was unfaithful to His word, but because they were unfaithful to their duty—the duty of cleaving wholly unto God, and keeping themselves from idols. He appeals to their past, as the tokens and prognostications of their future victories. But instead of exterminating, they intermarried with them, and the threatened alternative ensued that God did not drive them out; but, like tares among the wheat, they remained as temptations and snares and chastisements to the children of Israel. But their venerable leader still affirmed the faithfulness of God, and on the eve of going the way of all the earth, he made strong asseveration of it in their hearing. Not one thing had failed of His promises. And in like manner should all His threatenings be fulfilled did they go into idolatry, and so kindle against them the anger of the Lord.

JOSHUA XXIV, 1-11.—Joshua, it would appear, had a

second valedictory meeting with the children of Israel—his days having probably been prolonged beyond what he had expected. It was held at Shechem, not very far from Timnath-serah, the place of his residence. There seems to have been a convocation or general gathering; but as they could not all come within the reach of his voice, he called for the dignitaries, and probably through them addressed himself as unto all the people. The narrative in which he indulges, derives a pleasing interest from its outset with the high antiquity of Terah, the father of Abraham. “On the other side of the flood,” is on the other side of Euphrates—where their ancestors dwelt in old time. Then follows a very full view of their by-gone history, from their patriarchal history downward—through the period of their abode in Egypt and journey through the wilderness, to the more recent events in which themselves participated. It is well that as he had gone upward to Isaac, his son Esau—in connexion with their neighbours and his descendants, the Edomites—should be recognised. We have here also an allusion to the misconduct of Balaam, whose native hostility to the Israelites is here explicitly set before us.

12-18.—The narrative proceeds to the passage over Jordan, and we may here gather the explanation of the remarkable fact that the Israelites lost so few men in battle with their enemies: God interposed in their behalf by sending a powerful auxiliary—even the hornets, who, by their stings, could so discompose and annoy the enemy as to unfit them for action, and make them an easy prey to the onset of the Israelites. The confinement of these insects to the persons of the Canaanites, and the exemption of the Israelites from their attacks, was in itself a

striking miracle—a continuance of those manifestations which began in Egypt, and accompanied the progress of the selected people to their settlement in the promised land. Well might Joshua, on such promises, urge their adherence to the true God who had done such great things for them; and well does he justify his own choice—even that for him and his house they would serve the Lord! The alternative is forcibly put between Him who had thus delivered and prospered them, and those gods whom their fathers beyond the flood, or those gods whom the Amorites worshipped. The response of the people, too, is in keeping with the moral earnestness of the appeal which had been made to them. Their choice was the right one, and on right grounds, too, among which they very appropriately state what God had done for them, and particularly the great signs which He had wrought in their sight.

19-33.—Joshua warns them of their feebleness and irresolution, and of the danger they incur by a public profession which they might afterwards falsify. The people, however, persist in their promise, which being openly made, would, on the event of its failure, become a witness against themselves. This hazard, however, they were willing to incur; and so he bade them put away their strange gods, and made a solemn covenant. This covenant which had been ratified at Sinai and in the land of Moab, is now renewed at Shechem; and as Moses wrote the words of this ratification, so did Joshua—"these words," which as said to have been inscribed "in the book of the law of God," and yet appearing not in the Pentateuch but in the book of Joshua, makes that book to be of co-ordinate authority with the Books of Moses. There were here all the solemnities of a covenant—an

audible consent given to it by the people, its terms put down in writing—and, lastly, a stone of commemoration to keep it before the eyes of posterity.... The sanctuary in verse 26, is held by some to have been an old patriarchal sanctuary, as that of Beth-el. Others think that the ark of the Lord had been brought for the occasion from Shiloh to Shechem.... We must here take leave of good old Joshua, with whom we have companied for many days. May I meet him in Heaven! The people of that generation were faithful to the Lord, and might have transmitted their own loyalty to their children, had they been more observant of Joshua's purpose, that not only he, but he *and his house*, should serve the Lord. The decay of family religion is the sure precursor of national degeneracy.... It is interesting to observe the religious fidelity wherewith they executed the charge which Joseph left behind him respecting his bones.... So it was competent for Phinehas to have a property, and that, too, in a territory not assigned to the sons of Aaron.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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